

News story: Civil news: notification letters for HPCDS tender bids

We have started to notify organisations of the outcome of their tenders to deliver work under the Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme (HPCDS).

This follows:

- the passing of the deadline for tenders for HPCDS contracts on 11 December 2017
- notifications sent to bidders in January 2018 telling them whether they had been shortlisted for HPCDS contracts

This is earlier than we stated in the Information For Applicants. However, we did say that if we could conclude the assessment earlier then we would notify applicants as soon as possible. This was set out in our tender update of 28 February 2018.

How will these notifications be made?

We will use the e-Tendering system from 3 May 2018 to start notifying organisations shortlisted for the next stage of the tender process back in January.

There are four scheme areas where the assessment process is ongoing and we will not be notifying the outcomes at this time. Applicants in the affected areas have been contacted to confirm this and will be notified of the outcome as soon as possible.

With the exception of these scheme areas, we expect notification to have been completed by Tuesday 8 May 2018. Applicants who have bid for HPCDS contracts and have not been notified by Wednesday 9 May should contact us through the e-Tendering message board.

When will services begin?

Services under new HPCDS contracts will begin on 1 October 2018.

How long will the contracts last?

Each contract will initially run until 30 September 2021, with an option for the LAA to extend for up to a further 2 years.

What will happen next?

Following notifications, the LAA will work with successful organisations to

complete the verification process described in the letter of notification through the Bravo system.

However, organisations are reminded that contract awards are conditional on satisfactory bid verifications. Each applicant is responsible for providing all the necessary evidence they meet the verification requirements as out in the notification letter.

Further information

[Civil 2018 contracts tender](#) – to find out more about the tender process

Press release: PM meeting with António Guterres: 2 May 2018

The Prime Minister met the United Nations Secretary General, António Guterres, in Downing Street yesterday for bilateral talks.

The PM and the Secretary General agreed that they were meeting at a time of considerable challenge to the international rules based system. They discussed the recent use of chemical weapons in Syria, and the need to establish an independent investigation and attribution mechanism to deter future use. They also agreed it was important to defend the rules based system, including challenges to the wider non-proliferation system.

The Secretary General thanked the Prime Minister for the UK's valuable support for the UN's humanitarian efforts, including those in Somalia, Yemen, and Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Prime Minister said that the UK was committed to continuing our leading role on international development and humanitarian assistance, and supporting the efforts of the UN.

The pair noted the positive outcome of last month's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting at which leaders committed to ensuring 12 years of quality education and learning for all across the Commonwealth, and the Secretary General welcomed the UK's leadership on global education.

The Secretary General also noted the UK's work to counter modern slavery and the UN's commitment to action on this. The Prime Minister welcomed the Secretary General's efforts, and said that she would continue to call on countries to commit to the Call to Action on modern slavery, which she launched at the UN in September last year.

News story: Unlicensed medicines busted in Bolton

A total of 4 people were arrested yesterday following morning raids in Bolton after MHRA (Medicines & Healthcare products Regulatory Agency) investigators searched a series of addresses.

Officers executed searches at 5 locations across Bolton after a tireless investigation into a suspected network of illegal activity potentially running into the millions of pounds.

Investigators seized a large variety of prescription only medicine, including erectile dysfunction medication, hair loss medication, narcolepsy medication and steroids.

The suspects were arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to supply medicines, class C controlled drugs and money laundering. The suspects have been taken into custody to be questioned by MHRA investigators.

MHRA's Head of Enforcement, Alastair Jeffrey:

It is a serious criminal offence to sell potent unlicensed or prescription-only medicines.

Today's arrests are a result of a determined investigation by teams dedicated to protecting public health.

We work relentlessly with regulatory and law enforcement colleagues to identify and prosecute those involved.

Those who sell medicines illegally are exploiting vulnerable people and have no regard for their health. Prescription only medicines are potent and should only be taken under medical supervision.

MHRA is currently running the #FakeMeds campaign to educate people about the dangers of buying potentially dangerous or useless unlicensed medicines sold by illegal online suppliers.

Visit www.gov.uk/fakemeds for tips on buying medicines safely online and how to avoid unscrupulous sites.

Press release: Newly formed Heritage Council will help ensure sector thrives

The Heritage Council seeks to strengthen the link between the UK's heritage and the wider regeneration and placemaking agenda as well as helping government to best support the heritage sector.

Heritage Minister Michael Ellis said:

Heritage is an important part of our communities. It helps us to make sense of our past and shape the places we live, work and visit. The sector provides employment for hundreds and thousands of people and is an economic driver in our economy.

Our history and heritage are part of what make our country an attractive place to live and visit and I am committed to ensuring that we continue to be a world-leader in the protection and preservation of our historic sites so that we remain a go to destination.

The Council will create closer links between the government and the sector and will enable dialogue to drive progress in key policy areas affecting heritage. It will support the government in the implementation of policy and raise issues affecting the sector. In addition the Council and government will work together on issues such as planning, environmental protection, social and economic development and education.

Core membership of the Heritage Council is made up of: DCMS; DEFRA; MHCLG and HMT along with Historic England; The Heritage Lottery Fund; The Heritage Alliance; Natural England; The National Trust and Historic Houses.

The aim of the Council will enable collaboration and the exchange of ideas so that government and the sector can work together to protect and preserve Britain's heritage for future generations.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

Core members of the Council:

- DCMS – Michael Ellis, Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism
- DEFRA – Lord Gardiner of Kimble, Minister for Rural Affairs and Biosecurity
- MHCLG – Heather Wheeler MP, Minister for Housing and Homelessness
- HMT – John Glen MP, Economic Secretary to the Treasury

- Historic England – Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive
 - The Heritage Lottery Fund – Ros Kerlake, Chief Executive
 - The Heritage Alliance – Lizzie Glithero-West, Chief Executive
 - Natural England – James Cross, Chief Executive
 - The National Trust – Hilary McGrady, Director General
 - Historic Houses – Dr Ben Cowell, Director General
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[Press release: Benefit cap leading to “working role-models in families”:](#) [Esther McVey](#)

New analysis also shows that around 170,000 children are now living with a working adult as a result.

Work and Pensions Secretary Esther McVey today welcomed the new analysis as evidence that the cap is helping to transform lives by giving children “working role models in their families”.

The benefit cap is a limit on the total amount of benefit that working age people can get – introduced in 2013 to restore fairness to the welfare system. It incentivises work, including part-time work, as anyone eligible who moves into work and then earns enough for Working Tax Credit (or the equivalent under Universal Credit) becomes exempt.

Since the introduction of the cap in April 2013, 180,000 households have had their benefits capped. With 48,000 households having moved into work.

Work and Pensions Secretary Esther McVey said:

Every child deserves the best start in life, and we know that children living in a household with someone in work do better in school, have better educational attainment and are more likely to have a job later in life than children growing up in a home where no one works.

This new analysis into the number of children in workless families reducing under the benefit cap, shows how our welfare reforms are transforming lives by giving children real-life working role models in their families.

In the past there could have been families living in cycles of worklessness without the proper support or incentives to move into work with the security and peace of mind that comes from a regular wage. We now have record employment in the UK with more than 1,000

people moving into jobs each and every day since 2010.

The unemployment rate (4.2%) has not been lower since 1975, and the number of people out of work is down by 136,000 compared to a year ago. On average, 1,000 people have moved into jobs every day since 2010.

Work remains the best route out of poverty – around 75% of children in poverty leave poverty altogether when their parents move into full employment. Evaluation from the original cap shows lone parents were 51% more likely to go into work after a year than similar uncapped households.

In Universal Credit, claimants are exempt from the benefit cap if they earn at least £542 a month, equivalent to 16 hours at the National Living Wage. Working parents can also claim up to 85% of their eligible childcare costs, regardless of hours worked and how old the youngest child is.

The [benefit cap](#) is set at £20,000 a year outside London and £23,000 in Greater London to reflect higher rent costs.

Anyone working and receiving Working Tax Credit is exempt from the cap, as are households where someone receives:

- Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- the support component of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

Those claiming Carer's Allowance or Guardian's Allowance are exempt from the cap.

The figures cited above refer to households who had their Housing Benefit capped.

The [estimate of the number of children in households that were capped but are now in work](#) is calculated by multiplying the number of children in these households by the number of households.

Households with more than 5 children are grouped together, so for this calculation we have assumed that there are 6 children in these households.

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