

News story: The VMD Customer Satisfaction Survey 2018: Results

The VMD would like to thank those who took time to respond to our recent independent biennial customer satisfaction survey. We greatly appreciate your time in completing the survey and in providing us with feedback on our performance. We value your feedback as this enables us to further improve.

This survey was undertaken on our behalf by Mo Gannon and Associates Ltd – they are an independent company who provide marketing consultancy and market research, both in UK and internationally, specialising in the agricultural and veterinary industries. The survey was conducted in two parts, the quantitative questionnaire phase was completed in November 2017 and the qualitative phase was completed earlier this year.

There were 131 responses and of those companies responding, 93% showed there was a similar level of overall satisfaction or satisfaction had increased compared to year ago.

We have now received the final results, a summary of which can be seen in the attached [slide deck](#) (MS Powerpoint Presentation, 3.51MB) . Over the coming months we will be analysing this feedback to see what further improvements can be made, as well as ensuring that we maintain the high standards reflected within the results.

Press release: Charity Commission appoints interim manager to Ampleforth Abbey and the St Laurence Education Trust

The Charity Commission, the regulator of charities in England and Wales, has announced today that it has appointed an interim manager to Ampleforth Abbey ([1026493](#)) and the St Laurence Education Trust ([1063808](#)) as a result of continued concerns about the extent to which current safeguarding risks to pupils at the schools run by the charities are being adequately managed.

The Commission [opened a statutory inquiry](#) into both charities in November 2016 to investigate the charities' trustees' approach to safeguarding and their handling of allegations of abuse. The Commission is not satisfied that the charities' current safeguarding policies, procedures and practices are adequate and working properly. This includes concerns about the charities'

compliance with established safeguarding procedures.

It has therefore made an order under Section 76 (3)(g) of the Charities Act 2011 on 21 March 2018 to appoint Emma Moody of Womble Bond Dickinson as interim manager of both charities.

She will have all the powers and duties of a trustee, to the exclusion of the trustees, in respect of a number of safeguarding related matters.

Harvey Grenville, Head of Investigations and Enforcement at the Charity Commission said:

It is of paramount importance that beneficiaries, and others who come into contact with charities, are protected from harm. We are not satisfied that the trustees of these charities have made enough progress in improving the safeguarding environment for pupils in the schools connected to the charities. For this reason, we have appointed an interim manager to expedite changes in the safeguarding arrangements at the schools.

The appointment comes after the Commission reviewed the progress made by the trustees in implementing recommendations made in March 2017 by an independent review commissioned by the charities.

The interim manager's responsibilities will include:

- reviewing the sufficiency of the charities' governance, leadership, management, culture, policies and practices with regard to safeguarding;
- scrutinising and reviewing the charities' progress with implementing the recommendations arising from the independent review in 2017; and
- identifying and implementing any additional actions which are considered necessary or appropriate to provide a safe environment for children, young persons and vulnerable people at Ampleforth

Further information about the interim manager's contact details and appointment can be obtained from the Ampleforth website. The interim manager will periodically update parents on the progress of her assignment.

Ends

Notes to editors

1. The Charity Commission is the regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work see the [about us page](#) on GOV.UK.
2. Search for charities on our [online register](#).
3. This appointment is a temporary and protective power that will be reviewed at regular intervals. It will continue until the Commission makes a further Order for its variation or discharge.
4. The trustees of the charities will continue to have all the other powers and duties of trustees with the exception of the safeguarding functions as outlined above.

5. In the context of safeguarding issues, the Commission has a specific regulatory role which is focused on the conduct of trustees and the steps they take to protect beneficiaries and other persons who come into contact with the charity. The Commission will not directly investigate allegations or incidents of abuse, although it may investigate the handling of such matters by charities. Anyone with concerns about specific incidents of alleged abuses, whether historic or recent, regarding any charity, should report their concerns to the police and the relevant safeguarding authorities.
 6. It is the Commission's policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were. [Reports of previous inquiries](#) by the Commission are available on GOV.UK.
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Press release: Government Property Agency launches

The Government Property Agency (GPA) was launched as an Executive Agency of the Cabinet Office on 1 April. It will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Government Estate and generate benefits of between £1.4 billion and £2.4 billion over the next ten years.

GPA's initial portfolio of 80 properties will grow to over 1,000 as it takes on increasing responsibility for managing the general purpose central government estate. This is an unprecedented move to manage the government's property portfolio strategically in order to realise the benefits that departments cannot achieve on their own.

The GPA will partner with government departments to find innovative property solutions, and provide expertise to enable them to deliver wider business change more efficiently. More broadly, the GPA will also be an enabler for the delivery of Civil Service transformation, regional growth and the government's vision to strengthen the Union.

The GPA leads the Government Hubs programme and with HMRC has announced 12 Hubs to date across the UK, amounting to almost 261,000 sq/m. Each new hub has been the biggest pre-let in that city that year, and a huge boost in confidence and a source of investment for the locality. Furthermore the new hubs in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast were the biggest pre-let in those cities in the last ten years. Canary Wharf at 50,000 sq/m was the biggest pre-let in the UK in 2016.

The design of hubs will lead to more efficient use of the estate. The space needed for each civil servant to work is intended to reduce to 6 sq/m within strategic hubs, outperforming the current workspace standard for the office

estate of 8 sq/m per FTE. Smart working will be the foundation for the new Government Hubs – supporting flexibility, productivity, engagement, career development and wellbeing.

GPA has operated in shadow form for over a year, testing systems and ways of working, to ensure readiness for go-live and a sustainable organisation. During this period it has delivered estates services to Cabinet Office and BEIS as its foundation clients, worked in partnership with HMRC to deliver Hubs and secured £38m income from vacant space.

Through creating a centre for expertise in government for estates management, the GPA will have a breadth of experience, bringing specific property expertise, negotiation ability and commercial savvy to bear on major market transactions. This will have a direct benefit in maximising capital receipts, generating income and mitigating both costs and risks. The GPA will provide credible medium to long term investment opportunities, in both delivery of the suitable buildings and the longer term management of assets.

Oliver Dowden, Minister for Implementation said: “The creation of the Government Property Agency will transform the way property is managed in the general purpose central government estate, generating savings of over £1 billion over the next ten years. The Hubs programme is a catalyst for growth in city centres across the UK, helping to boost jobs and economic growth, as well as demonstrating the government’s commitment to strengthening the Union and enhancing regional career paths.”

Liz Peace, Chair GPA said: “This is an exciting time for government property and demonstrates the focus on improving the commercial capability in estates management. The GPA team will bring the concept of a cross government corporate real estate organisation into reality. As well as the significant benefits to the Exchequer that will come from the GPA, its impact on departmental transformation and quality of workspace will be key to delivering a truly modern and excellent Civil Service.”

[Transparency data: Fishguard linkspan replacement Harbour Revision Order](#)

Updated: Harbour Revision Order application received and supporting documents uploaded

On 29 March 2018, the the Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours Company made a formal application to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) under section 14 of the Harbours Act 1964 for a Harbour Revision Order to construct a new linkspan bridge. The proposed project will involve the construction of a new linkspan to replace an existing linkspan currently at

the project location.

The application is undergoing a 42 day public consultation, starting on 25 April 2018. The deadline for submitting comments is 06 June 2018. For further information on the consultation process, please review the advertisement notice.

Due to file size constraints the environmental statement has not been uploaded to the public register, if you wish to view this please contact the harbour orders team via the harbourorders@marinemanagement.org.uk inbox.

If you would like to make a representation please do so in writing via the harbourorders@marinemanagement.org.uk inbox. Representations should quote reference DC10168.

The applicant previously notified the Marine Management Organisation in accordance with paragraph 3 of Schedule 3 of the Harbours Act 1964 of their intention to submit a HRO to construct a new linkspan bridge.

News story: Patent fee changes on 6 April 2018

Patent fees are changing on 6 April 2018.

This follows [consultations on the statutory patent fees changes](#) in 2017.

There are new fees for patent applications and patents, and new fees for lengthy applications.

The changes will:

- help us maintain high quality, efficient services for our customers
- ensure that the IPO maintains a competitive fee structure
- improve cost recovery for the services we provide
- continue to meet the bulk of IPO patent granting costs through renewal fees

[Guidance for business](#) setting out the detail and how the new fees work in practice is available.