

# Research and analysis: ACRE advice: application for a trial of GM Neisseria lactamica (17/R50/01)

This document is the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment (ACRE's) advice to government in considering a request from [University of Southampton \(17/R50/01\)](#). The application is for a deliberate release of genetically modified Neisseria lactamica (Nlac).

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## Press release: Reforms to boost UK's digital infrastructure

Reforms made today to outdated legislation will reduce the costs of housing phone masts and other communications infrastructure on private land. This opens the way for faster and more reliable broadband and mobile services, particularly in rural areas.

Changes to the UK's Electronic Communications Code will:

- bring down the rents telecoms operators pay to landowners to install equipment to be more in line with utilities providers, such as gas and water;
- make it easier for operators to upgrade and share their equipment with other operators to help increase coverage;
- make it easier for telecoms operators and landowners to resolve legal disputes.

Matt Hancock, Minister of State for Digital, said:

It's not good enough that many people are struggling with poor mobile and broadband connections which is why we are improving coverage across the UK.

We want everyone to benefit from the growth of digital services. Removing these outdated restrictions will help promote investment in new technologies such as 5G, and give mobile operators more freedom to improve their networks in hard-to-reach places.

By the end of the year all mobile operators are required to deliver coverage to 90 per cent of the UK and 95 per cent of all homes and businesses will be

able to get superfast broadband, but more needs to be done.

These reforms will help to drive investment and stimulate the continued growth, rollout and maintenance of communication technology infrastructure, an increasingly significant area of the UK's economy.

Hamish MacLeod, Director of Mobile UK said:

The Electronic Communications Code is an important piece of the puzzle alongside further planning reform that will help mobile operators to overcome the challenges they face with expanding their networks, while also developing innovative services for customers.

Good mobile connectivity is no longer an optional extra. It is essential infrastructure as core to modern economic activity as broadband, electricity and other essential services.

Mark Talbot FRICS, Chair of the Royal Institute of Chartered (RICS) Surveyors Telecoms Forum Board, said:

RICS recognises the critical role that a modern, efficient and equitable digital infrastructure has on the future development of the UK economy. RICS has worked closely with our colleagues in DCMS to ensure that the new Code enables investment in our national digital infrastructure whilst balancing the needs of the public and private property owners.

With high speed internet seen by many as the fourth utility service the public and businesses expect access to digital services when they want and as they want, and RICS believes that the reformed Code is a great step forward towards this ultimate goal.

The old Electronic Communications Code was originally enacted in 1984, and became out-of-date as technology evolved, making it difficult for landowners and network operators to reach agreements and resolve disputes when rolling out modern digital infrastructure.

The Government reformed the Code through the Digital Economy Act, which received Royal Assent in April. The supporting regulations laid in Parliament today will bring the new Code into force, which is expected to take effect in December 2017.

**ENDS**

**Notes for Editors:**

- The Government has today laid draft regulations in Parliament needed to commence reform of the Electronic Communications Code. The changes will help ensure network providers achieve the coverage and connectivity

targets set by government to reach the hardest-to-reach places in the UK.

- The Electronic Communications Code (the Code) is the legislative framework that enables electronic communications network providers to construct electronic communications networks. The Code was reviewed by the Law Commission in 2012 which recommended reform, and the Government has carried out extensive consultation with all stakeholders before bringing forward the amendments to the legislation.
- For further information on reform of the Electronic Communications Code: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-publishes-proposal-s-for-a-new-electronic-communications-code>  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/digital-economy-bill-2016>

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## [News story: Hundreds of pupils on track towards fluency in Mandarin](#)

Almost 400 pupils from 14 schools across England have been praised by Nick Gibb for their progress in learning Mandarin, as part of a pilot programme to help them get ahead in the global jobs market.

The Mandarin Excellence Programme, delivered by the UCL Institute of Education in partnership with the British Council, aims to have at least 5,000 pupils in England on track towards fluency in Mandarin Chinese by 2020.

The first cohort of children have completed the first year of the programme and over 380 pupils achieved more than 80% in specially-created tests in reading, writing, listening and speaking, demonstrating their quick progress and commitment.

This year, an additional 23 schools throughout England have entered into the Mandarin Excellence Programme, meaning hundreds more pupils will soon have the opportunity to learn this advanced skill.

School Standards Minister Nick Gibb said:

Mandarin Chinese is an important language to learn in our globally competitive economy. I am pleased that this programme is continuing to grow, allowing more pupils to be taught Mandarin at an advanced level. I would like to congratulate the first cohort of students on their success. They have achieved some excellent results thanks to their hard work and dedication. This will give them a significant advantage when competing in the global jobs market, and is particularly important as we prepare to leave the European Union.

Pupils on the programme spend an average of eight hours per week studying the language.

In addition to improving students' fluency in the language, the UCL Institute of Education, in collaboration with other providers, aims to have trained at least 100 new qualified Chinese teachers by the end of the programme.

Katharine Carruthers, Director of the UCL Institute Of Education (IOE) Confucius Institute, who deliver the training, said:

The progress that learners have made after their first year participating in the Mandarin Excellence Programme is exceptional. The test results from the end of year one of the programme demonstrate the success and the impact that it is having. This year we are delighted to welcome additional schools joining the programme which will ensure that more than 1,000 new learners across the country are given the opportunity to learn Chinese to such an advanced level.

Mark Herbert, Head of Schools Programmes at the British Council said:

Mandarin Chinese is one of the languages that matters most to the UK's prosperity – and its importance is only likely to increase as the UK repositions itself on the world stage.

If the UK is to remain globally competitive, we need far more young people leaving school with a good grasp of Mandarin in order to successfully work abroad or for businesses here in the UK. More than that, learning Mandarin is a fascinating process which creates a connection to the amazing Chinese culture and over a billion Chinese speakers globally.

State schools in England can apply to join the Mandarin Excellence Programme from 2018 with funding available to support successful delivery. As part of the programme, some pupils will have the chance to go to China from summer 2018.

More information about the programme and how to get involved can be found [here](#).

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**[News story: Appointment of Dame Anne](#)**

# Owers as the new IMBs National Chair

Dame Anne Owers has been appointed as National Chair of the Independent Monitoring Boards (IMBs) from 1 November 2017.

Dame Anne is currently the Chair of the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), shortly to become the Independent Office for Police Conduct, at which point she will be stepping down. Dame Anne was Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons between 2001 and 2010 and chaired a review of prisons in Northern Ireland in 2010 to 2011.

She was also a non-executive director of the Criminal Cases Review Commission. She currently chairs Clinks (the infrastructure body for the voluntary sector working with offenders) and the Koestler Trust. She was a member of the advisory group to the recent Lammy review of race and criminal justice.

Secretary of State David Lidington said:

I welcome the appointment of Dame Anne Owers as the first National Chair of the Independent Monitoring Boards. She will play a vital role in ensuring we are accountable to the public for our prisons and ensure that they are safe and secure and are able to transform lives.

It is important to improve the transparency about how our prisons are running and provide assurance that they maintain proper standards of care and decency.

Independent Monitoring Boards (IMBs) provide statutory, independent oversight, monitoring the treatment and care of prisoners and detainees. They operate in prisons, young offender institutions, immigration removal centres, some short-term holding facilities and on flights for those being removed from the UK.

This appointment has been made in line with the Commissioner's Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies.

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## News story: New route into classroom for aspiring teachers

A new postgraduate teaching apprenticeship to offer talented graduates an alternative route into the profession has been announced today (19 October)

by Education Secretary Justine Greening.

Developed in partnership with the sector, the new apprenticeship will provide hands-on experience for new recruits and a chance to learn from excellent, experienced teachers during training, as well as the incentive of potential employment as a qualified teacher at the end of the apprenticeship course.

The apprenticeship, which launches in September 2018, will mirror the entry criteria and high-quality course content currently required of all other teacher trainees and will give schools across the country the opportunity to use the apprenticeship to recruit and train new teachers in-house.

Education Secretary, Justine Greening, said:

Getting the best people to train as teachers and into our classrooms is a crucial part of giving every child the high quality education deserve. This new route will provide another pathway for talented graduates into a profession that will give them the chance to change lives for the better on a daily basis.

The new teaching apprenticeship will run in parallel with School Direct Salaried (SDS) training in 2018 that already allows graduates to train while on the job. All apprentices will be paid as unqualified teachers.

Schools who are not eligible for the apprenticeship levy, or who require additional funds, will receive government funding to cover up to 90 per cent of training costs.

CEO of South Farnham School Educational Trust, Sir Andrew Carter, said:

The postgraduate apprenticeship route into teaching will be greatly welcomed by the profession. The opportunity for more graduates to be trained within the school setting has the potential to increase the number of applicants. Working alongside great teachers and learning at first hand is the best way to create great teachers.

Chairing the Employers Group, who put the programme together, was a great privilege. The expertise, enthusiasm and wisdom of the group focussed all that is best in the educational world. Everyone was, and is, totally focussed on the goal which is to create a strong, plentiful and sustainable flow of recruits into this great and noble profession.

Executive Director of the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET), James Noble Rogers, and Executive Director, National Association of School Based Teacher Trainers (NASBTT), Emma Hollis, said:

We are pleased that the new apprenticeship will be delivered in

partnership between schools and accredited Initial Teacher Training providers and will be subject to the same regulatory framework as other ITT courses. That represents a good outcome from the perspective of the employer-led group which UCET and NASBTT were happy to be represented on.

In the future we would like to see the apprenticeship developed to reflect any changes to Qualified Teacher Status and the rationalisation of some of the rules applying to apprenticeships generally which we don't think necessarily translate well for ITT.

To ensure apprentices are ready to enter the classroom full-time at the end of their apprenticeship, schools have helped set assessment criteria to give them greater oversight of the training of prospective members of staff.

Applications for Initial Teacher Training open through UCAS on October 26, allowing applicants to convert their place to an apprenticeship at a later date.

The development of this apprenticeship is part of the government's commitment to ensure there are 3 million high quality apprenticeship starts by 2020.

As part of the plan to get excellent teachers into the schools that need them most, the government is also piloting a new programme to reimburse student loan repayments for teachers in the early years of their careers. Around 800 modern foreign language and 1,700 science teachers a year will be eligible for this pilot scheme.