

[News story: London Borough of Ealing wins prestigious Touchstone Award 2017](#)

The Award, launched in 2012 to encourage education and enforcement of hallmarking and to reward the best initiative relating to hallmarking, was awarded by the British Hallmarking Council and the four Assay Offices for a hallmarking project which led to the successful prosecution of premises with non-compliance of hall-marking. In a well planned and executed series of inspections, Ealing carried out a range of activities in various high street premises, which revealed:

- Major non-compliance of the Hallmarking Act within the jewellers inspected.
- 82% of seized items not hallmarked
- 22% of items fraudulently described as 22 carat

Successful prosecutions followed with more than £11,000 in fines.

A hallmarking project is now embedded within the Ealing TS Annual Service Plan and Priorities. The joint expertise of the Trading Standards Service and the UK Assay Offices, working together, was essential in this successful hallmarking operation.

Applications from across the UK for the Touchstone Award reflected complaint intervention, enforcement and information operations. There was also encouraging evidence of positive long term activity in hallmarking operations from all applicants.

The award was made at the prestigious CTSI/Status International Awards Dinner held at the Royal Hall in Harrogate as part of CTSI's annual Consumer Affairs and Trading Standards Conference and Exhibition 2017.

[News story: North Sea exploration funding announced](#)

New exploration in the North Sea will be supported by a £5 million UK government fund for 2018/19, Philip Hammond announced today (25 September) during a visit to Aberdeen and Dundee. The funding will be used by the Oil and Gas Authority (OGA) to survey under-explored areas of the UK Continental Shelf to find potential new deposits.

The announcement came on the same day that the Oil & Gas Technology Centre in Aberdeen, which the Chancellor visited and is part-funded by the UK

government, said its work with industry on new subsea technologies could help unlock 400 million additional barrels of oil and gas from the North Sea and £3 billion of additional value to the industry.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond, said:

The oil and gas industry remains vital for the Scottish economy and the UK as a whole. The £5 million funding I am announcing will help exploration to find potential new deposits, and boost prospects for jobs in Aberdeen and the surrounding area. This continues the UK government's extensive package of tax and funding support for the industry and the wider Scottish economy.

I've seen today how Dundee has benefitted from our life sciences and creative sector funding. I now look forward to progress being made on the Tay Cities Deal, which will follow the £1 billion already committed by the UK to Scotland's City Deals so far.

This government will continue using the UK's broad shoulders to provide Scotland with the skills and support it needs to thrive in the future.

UK Energy Minister, Richard Harrington, said:

North Sea oil will continue to fuel growth and jobs across Scotland and the rest of the UK, with an estimated 10-20 billion barrels still remaining.

I was in Aberdeen last month and saw first-hand the work of the Oil and Gas Authority which we established to be a strong, independent regulator focused on maximising economic recovery.

The sector continues to have the full support of the UK government, confidence is returning, and today's announcement recognises there are great opportunities for further exploration.

Earlier in the day, the Chancellor met local businesses in Dundee to discuss how UK government tax support has helped them grow, including reducing corporation tax and introducing creative sector tax relief. The waterfront regeneration underway in Dundee includes the stunning new V&A museum currently under construction, supported by £5 million UK government funding.

Philip Hammond also visited Dundee University life sciences complex, which is a world leader in areas including drug discovery. It has received more than £20 million in UK government funding in recent years and is now ranked highly on global ratings for its scientific excellence and impact of its research.

In Aberdeen, he met oil and gas industry representatives to discuss how the £5 million funding could help employment and the economy in the region. The

UK government has given substantial support to the oil and gas sector, including a £1.3 billion package of tax cuts at Budget 2015 and a further £1 billion package at Budget 2016.

The UK internal market is the most important for Scotland's economy. Scotland sells four times as much to the rest of the UK as it does to the entire EU, for example, and the UK is currently working to protect the benefits of this market, and provide continuity and certainty as we prepare to leave the EU.

The UK government is also backing plans to establish Aberdeen as a global leader in decommissioning, creating skilled jobs and exporting this advanced knowledge to other countries. Tax relief for decommissioning is in place, covering around 40% of the total cost for UK companies and forecast to be worth around £24 billion between now and the 2050s. The OGA has also committed to reduce the overall costs for industry.

[News story: CEN updates affecting chemical measurements \(food\) September 2017](#)

The following lists of standards were published by the European standardisation organisation, CEN, during the period June to August 2017, some of which are relevant to chemical measurement in support of food regulation.

[EN 16995:2017](#) – Foodstuffs – Vegetable oils and foodstuff on basis of vegetable oils – Determination of mineral oil saturated hydrocarbons (MOSH) and mineral oil aromatic hydrocarbons (MOAH).

Mineral oil saturated hydrocarbons (MOSH) consist of linear and branched alkanes, and alkyl-substituted cycloalkanes, whilst mineral oil aromatic hydrocarbons (MOAH) include mainly alkyl-substituted polyaromatic hydrocarbons.

Major sources of mineral oils in food may arise from food packaging and additives, processing aids, and lubricants used in food production and can have a potential adverse health effect.

This standard describes a method for the determination of saturated and aromatic hydrocarbons (from C10 to C50) in vegetable oils and food. The method uses on-line high performance liquid chromatography coupled to a gas chromatograph with a flame ionisation detector (HPLC-GC-FID). The method has been validated in an inter-laboratory trial using samples containing naturally contaminated and spiked MOSH and MOAH in vegetable oil samples, mayonnaise and margarine samples. The method has been proven suitable for

determining MOSH and MOAH concentrations above 10 mg/kg in samples.

In case of suspected interferences from natural sources, the mineral origin of the MOSH and MOAH fraction can be verified by examining the fragmentation patterns using a gas chromatography coupled to a mass spectrometer detector (GC-MS).

[CEN/TS 17083:2017](#) – Foodstuffs – Determination of acrylamide in food and coffee by gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS)

Acrylamide is a substance that naturally forms in starchy food products during high-temperature cooking, including frying, baking, roasting and therefore can be found in wide range of foods including roasted potatoes and root vegetables, chips, crisps, toast, cakes, biscuits, cereals and coffee. Studies on laboratory animals have shown that exposure to acrylamide through the diet increases the likelihood of developing gene mutations and tumours in various organs.

This technical specification* provides a method for the determination of acrylamide in cereal-based products, potato-based products and coffee by gas-chromatography linked to a mass spectrometer detector (GC-MS). This was a single-laboratory validated method using acrylamide spiked samples in bread, water biscuit, infant cereal, biscuit, green coffee, roast coffee and instant coffee in the range 30 µg/kg to 1,500 µg/kg.

EN 16995 and TS 17083 have been developed in accordance with European Commission Mandate [M/463](#) to prepare standards for the determination of food contaminants implementing the framework of [Regulation \(EC\) No 882/2004](#) on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules.

Further information on food legislation can be found on the Government Chemist website:

[Food and feed law: Compendium of UK food and feed legislation with associated context and changes during April to June 2017 – Government Chemist Programme Report](#)

*A Technical Specification (TS) is an alternative normative document to a European Standard (EN) providing specifications for methodologies and/or evolving technologies.

Press release: UK AT HEART OF INTERNATIONAL MISSILE DEFENCE EXERCISE

US-led Exercise Formidable Shield has today begun in waters off the West Coast of Scotland.

A Royal Navy Type 45 Destroyer and two Type 23 Frigates will, alongside ships and crews from Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands and the United States, join one of the most sophisticated and complex air and missile exercises ever undertaken in the UK.

Lasting a month, allies will work together to detect, track and shoot down both anti-ship and ballistic missile targets. 13 ships will fire on 12 live missile targets over four days, improving how allies work together in an air and missile defence environment.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

North Korean tests have shown the danger of rogue states developing longer range missiles. By hosting this cutting-edge exercise in anti-missile defence with allied navies Britain is at the forefront of developing a more effective response to this growing threat.

Rear Admiral Paul Bennett, Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Capability) said:

Formidable Shield is a terrific example of the leading role that the UK plays in development of maritime air and missile defence – protecting our people and working with our allies.

Ahead of the exercise, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and QinetiQ recently invested £60 million into the Hebrides Range to modernise the equipment and facilities. A further £16.8 million will be invested in two new BAE Systems tracking radars, to be installed on St Kilda, and upgrade two existing radars at MOD Hebrides.

The new radars are part of the £95m Air Range Modernisation programme agreed in December 2016 with the UK MOD.

[Press release: Priti Patel: Extra UK aid to Dominica following deadly Hurricane Maria](#)

VIDEO: [footage of International Development Secretary arriving on Tortola, British Virgin Islands](#)

VIDEOS AND PHOTOS: [latest photos and footage of the damage on the British Virgin Islands](#)

VIDEOS AND PHOTOS: [latest photos and footage of the devastation wrought in Dominica](#)

The UK is providing a further £5 million UK aid package for Dominica, the island worst hit by Hurricane Maria, the International Development Secretary announced during a visit to the region today (Sunday 24 September).

Hurricane Maria ripped through Dominica earlier this week, leaving 98% of buildings damaged and thousands without power. It was the first category five hurricane to hit the island in living memory, affecting almost the entire 70,000 population.

The UK aid will provide immediate relief, including shelter, hygiene kits and cooking equipment, to the areas left devastated by the tropical storm.

Ms Patel announced the fresh UK government support as she visited HMS Ocean, which on Friday delivered 60 tonnes of UK aid to the Caribbean, almost doubling the amount of aid in the region.

Later today, she will spend time on the British Virgin Islands where she will see UK aid in action, meeting families whose lives were torn apart by Hurricane Irma, which struck earlier this month. She will also visit Anguilla to see UK efforts to get schools and businesses up and running to speed up recovery.

The £5 million pledge brings the British Government's financial support for islands hit by Hurricane Maria and Hurricane Irma to £62 million. This has gone to islands including British Overseas Territories: British Virgin Islands, Anguilla and Turks and Caicos.

The British Government is also doubling UK public donations made to the British Red Cross' Irma and Maria appeals, a pledge which has so far raised over £2 million.

During the visit Ms Patel said:

The UK has pledged to give £5 million to the people of Dominica, the island worst hit by Hurricane Maria – on top of the £57 million already promised to the region – to strengthen recovery following these relentless disasters.

I have come to the British Virgin Islands and Anguilla to see first-hand UK aid in action, helping families whose lives have been ripped apart first by Hurricane Irma and then Maria.

The UK is leading the way in the relief effort, delivering emergency food, water and shelter to those who need it most.

We will continue to clear up after this devastation in the weeks, months and years to come.

The UK was one of the first to arrive in Dominica following the storm, with DFID field teams immediately bringing urgent medical supplies such as insulin and water purifiers. Much needed shelter has also arrived.

The UK is working with the UN, Red Cross and other partners on the ground to distribute aid, including food, across Dominica. Alongside this, we are supporting the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) to provide emergency healthcare, safe water and sanitation, and manage disease outbreaks. UK aid will go directly on restoring health services and increasing access to healthcare in the most affected areas.

This UK aid comes after the Prime Minister of Dominica formally requested international support to address the devastation caused by Hurricane Maria.

40 DFID aid experts are on the ground alongside over 2,000 military and 50 police officers and DFID has chartered a number of flights and vessels which will transport additional relief items when and where they are most needed.

The DFID field team are also looking at long-term recovery on the islands, and rebuilding houses, hospitals and schools. During her visit, Ms Patel will meet Government representatives from the overseas territories to discuss how to build back better to make sure these islands have greater resilience to future storms.

40 tonnes of humanitarian aid has already been distributed across the Caribbean, including over four tonnes of food and water on the British Virgin Islands; 720 litres of water to the Turks and Caicos Islands; and over two tonnes of building materials to Anguilla.

Work to prepare Anguilla for the impact of Hurricane Maria proved hugely successful in preventing further damage to infrastructure. Two tonnes of corrugated iron was provided to bolster hospital and police stations roofs. Food, tarpaulins, hygiene and shelter kits provided by DFID are also being distributed on the island by the Red Cross.

Vital supplies, including food, bottled water and shelters, were also distributed to the Turks and Caicos Islands earlier this week via three RAF flights and DFID field teams are urgently assessing the damage on the island. A DFID barge will soon arrive with supplies to restore power, including building materials, generators and equipment.

A Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Rapid Deployment Team (RDT) has arrived in St Lucia to provide consular assistance to affected British nationals who have left Dominica by ferry. The FCO is also finalising plans for an RDT to travel to Dominica to provide consular assistance to affected British Nationals.

1. The £5 million is UK Overseas Development Assistance funding for immediate humanitarian needs and early recovery in Dominica.
2. This additional £5 million brings the total UK response to £62 million. On top of this, the British Government is matching public donations of up to £3 million to the British Red Cross' appeals for Hurricane Irma

and Maria.

3. Five DFID experts are currently on Dominica and are undertaking a rapid needs assessment to identify where aid will be delivered.
4. DFID's initial assessment team has already moved essential supplies to the region ready to provide immediate assistance once we establish what is most needed. This is helping to restore vital communications and running water, and clearing roads.
5. Response efforts are being led by DFID experts on the ground, working with national authorities and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA).
6. On Friday, HMS Ocean arrived with over 60 tonnes of UK aid on the British Virgin Islands to provide relief to the victims of both Hurricane Irma and Maria across the region.
7. The ship arrived with 5,000 hygiene kits, 10,000 water buckets and over 500,000 water purification tablets to provide more than 10 million litres of water, along with more troops to support our aid experts on the ground who are helping restore the lives of those who have lost everything.
8. This is on top of the 75 tonnes of DFID relief items that have arrived or been bought in the region, including food, water, nearly 3,000 shelter kits, 5,000 solar lanterns and 10,000 buckets.
9. An additional \$19 million is being provided to Dominica by the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility – which UK aid, along with others, helped to establish – and CCRIF has paid out \$50.7 million in total in light of both Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria.
10. VIDEO: [footage of International Development Secretary arriving on Tortola, British Virgin Islands](#)
11. VIDEOS AND PHOTOS: [latest photos and footage of the damage on the British Virgin Islands](#)
12. VIDEOS AND PHOTOS: [latest photos and footage of the devastation wrought in Dominica](#)
13. More footage of the International Development Secretary's visit will be available later today. Please contact the press office on 0207 023 0600