

Press release: Exiting the EU with certainty

The Government will today take the next step in returning power from Brussels to the UK by introducing the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill.

Known as the Repeal Bill, it is designed to ensure that the UK exits the EU with maximum certainty, continuity and control. As far as possible, the same rules and laws will apply on the day after exit as on the day before.

This will allow the UK to leave the EU while ensuring that our future laws will be made in London, Edinburgh, Belfast and Cardiff.

For businesses, workers and consumers across the UK that means they can have confidence that they will not be subject to unexpected changes on the day we leave the EU. It also delivers on our promise to end the supremacy of EU law in the UK.

The Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, David Davis, said:

This Bill means that we will be able to exit the European Union with maximum certainty, continuity and control. That is what the British people voted for and it is exactly what we will do – ensure that the decisions that affect our lives are taken here in the UK.

It is one of the most significant pieces of legislation that has ever passed through Parliament and is a major milestone in the process of our withdrawal from the European Union.

By working together, in the national interest, we can ensure we have a fully functioning legal system on the day we leave the European Union.

The eyes of the country are on us and I will work with anyone to achieve this goal and shape a new future for our country.

The Repeal Bill is a mechanism to achieve three simple aims:

- Repeal the European Communities Act, remove supremacy of EU law and return control to the UK.
- Convert EU law into UK law where appropriate, giving businesses continuity to operate in the knowledge that nothing has changed overnight, and providing certainty that rights and obligations will not be subject to sudden change.
- Create the necessary temporary powers to correct the laws that no longer operate appropriately so that our legal system continues to function outside the EU.

The Bill sets out how we will prepare our statute book for exit but will not make major changes to policy or legislation beyond what is necessary to ensure the law continues to work properly on day one.

As we exit the EU we want to ensure power sits closer to the people of the UK than ever before. The Bill will ensure that nothing changes for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – they will not lose any of their current decision-making powers.

The Government expects there will be a significant increase in the decision-making power of each devolved administration.

As powers are repatriated from the EU, the Government will ensure they are exercised within the UK in a way that ensures no new barriers to living and doing business within the UK are created. This will protect the UK internal market, ensuring we have the ability to strike the best trade deals around the world, protect our common resources, and fulfil our international obligations.

The Government has already made clear that as the Bill affects the powers of the devolved administrations and legislates in devolved areas, we will seek the consent of the devolved legislatures for the Bill. We would like all parts of the UK to come together in support of this legislation, which is crucial to delivering the outcome of the referendum.

The Bill will also provide the Government with a limited power to implement elements of the withdrawal agreement we expect to reach with the EU before we exit.

We are clear we want a smooth and orderly exit and the Bill is integral to that approach.

To ensure we are prepared for the process of withdrawal from the EU, the Government will also introduce a number of Bills over the course of the next two years including a Customs Bill and an Immigration Bill.

The Repeal Bill means we can make corrections to EU law so that it functions as UK law – this could involve changing a reference to a particular piece of EU law or transferring important functions from EU institutions to UK institutions, depending on the outcome of the negotiations. Allowing corrections to be made quickly will provide certainty for business.

For further information please contact the DExEU Press Office on 0207 276 0432 or view our factsheets [here](#).

The Bill can be found [here](#), along with some explanatory notes [here](#).

News story: Next steps on the Finance Bill and Making Tax Digital

Three million of the smallest businesses and landlords will be able to move to the new digital system for keeping tax records at a pace that is right for them, Ministers announced today as they set out the next steps for the Finance Bill.

The government has listened to concerns raised by parliamentarians, in particular the Treasury Select Committee, businesses and professional bodies about the pace of change and is taking steps to ensure a smooth transition to a digital tax system.

Making Tax Digital will help bring the tax system into the 21st century by providing businesses with a modern, streamlined system to keep their tax records and provide information to HMRC. Roll out for Making Tax Digital has been amended to ensure businesses have plenty of time to adapt to the changes.

Mel Stride, Financial Secretary to the Treasury and Paymaster General said:

Businesses agree that digitising the tax system is the right direction of travel. However, many have been worried about the scope and pace of reforms.

We have listened very carefully to their concerns and are making changes so that we can bring the tax system into the digital age in a way that is right for all businesses.

Under the new timetable:

- only businesses with a turnover above the VAT threshold (currently £85,000) will have to keep digital records and only for VAT purposes
- they will only need to do so from 2019
- businesses will not be asked to keep digital records, or to update HMRC quarterly, for other taxes until at least 2020

Making Tax Digital will be available on a voluntary basis for the smallest businesses, and for other taxes.

This means that businesses and landlords with a turnover below the VAT threshold will be able to choose when to move to the new digital system.

As VAT already requires quarterly returns, no business will need to provide information to HMRC more regularly during this initial phase than they do now.

All businesses and landlords will have at least two years to adapt to the

changes before being asked to keep digital records for other taxes.

HMRC are fully committed to supporting businesses in this transition. HMRC has already begun piloting the Making Tax Digital services and will continue to do so, testing the system extensively with businesses. It will start to pilot MTDfB for VAT by the end of this year, starting with small-scale, private testing, followed by a wider, live pilot starting in Spring 2018. This will allow for well over a year of testing before any businesses are mandated to use the system.

Ministers also confirmed today that the Finance Bill will be introduced as soon as possible after the summer recess. This will legislate for all policies that were included in the pre-election Finance Bill, raising over £16 billion across the next five years to fund our vital public services.

The government has also re-confirmed that all policies originally announced to start from April 2017 will be effective from that date.

Further Information

These changes will be legislated for as part of the Finance Bill 2017.

Changes to VAT reporting will come into effect from April 2019. From that date, businesses above the VAT threshold have to provide their VAT information to HMRC through Making Tax Digital software.

Millions of businesses are already banking, paying bills, and interacting with each other and their customers online. Making Tax Digital will help businesses to get their tax bills right the first time and reduce the £8 billion tax gap resulting from avoidable errors.

Press release: 5% decrease in number of scientific procedures on animals

The number of scientific procedures carried out on live animals has decreased by 5% in the last year, according to the [annual statistical report released today](#), Thursday 13 July 2017.

The total number of procedures decreased to 3.94 million from 4.14 million, a 206,000 reduction compared with 2015.

The number of experiments rose to a peak of 5.61 million in 1971, followed by a steady fall to 2.62 million procedures overall in 2001. Since then, the number of procedures has shown a general increase, predominantly due to the advent of gene technology and the breeding and use of genetically altered animals, but in recent years has remained around 4 million.

Of the 2.02 million experimental procedures that took place in 2016, 5.6 % (114,000) were assessed as severe procedures compared to 5.9 % (123,000) in 2015.

Of the 1.91 million procedures that took place in 2016 involving the creation/breeding of genetically altered animals that were not used in further procedures, 2 % (40,000) were assessed as severe, compared to 3 % (62,000) in 2015.

A Home Office spokesperson said:

The UK has one of the most comprehensive animal welfare systems in the world and we are completely committed to the proper regulation of the use of animals in scientific research.

This research helps us to ensure that medicines are safe to use and to find treatments for cancer and other diseases, among a range of other benefits.

Our legislation provides a rigorous regulatory system that ensures animal research and testing is carried out only where no practicable alternative exists and under controls which keep suffering to an absolute minimum.

News story: £40m investment in high-tech Typhoon Defence System

The contract, announced at today's Airpower Conference in London, has been awarded to UK-based company Leonardo and will upgrade the aircraft's Defensive Aids Sub System (DASS).

The DASS will upgrade the way the aircraft protects itself from a full range of threats, including enemy aircraft and missiles launched from the ground, enabling it to continue carrying out successful missions like protecting Britain's skies as part of Quick Reaction Alert and defeating Daesh in Iraq and Syria as part of Op Shader.

Running over a two year period, the contract will sustain 65 high-value jobs at Leonardo's site in Luton, as well as 41 jobs at BAE Systems in Warton, Lancashire.

The contract comes as Royal Air Force pilots test advanced weapons and software upgrades for the Typhoon.

Defence Secretary, Sir Michael Fallon said:

Our Armed Forces face ever-evolving threats so we must invest in cutting-edge technology to ensure they can operate in hostile theatres. Our growing Defence budget and £178 billion equipment plan makes this possible; giving UK forces the defences they need to protect them, their kit and the people of Britain.

The RAF's Typhoon jet is already a state-of-the-art combat aircraft that protects the UK both at home and abroad, but today's announcement is a clear example of how it is being continually enhanced and upgraded so it remains as effective tomorrow as it is today.

The Typhoon, which provides a Quick Reaction Alert to help protect the UK, is expected to operate in a range of hostile environments with the Defensive Aids Sub System providing a set of self-defence sensors and countermeasures which detect and evaluate potential threats and automatically deploy the most effect countermeasure.

Chief Executive Officer at the MOD's Defence Equipment and Support organisation, Tony Douglas, said:

This contract is the product of close cooperation between MOD and Industry and comes at an incredibly productive time for Typhoon which has also seen a new package of advanced weapons, software and avionics enhancements being tested by Royal Air Force pilots.

This upgrade will ensure Typhoon can identify and defeat known and emerging threats and shows that the MOD is committed to ensuring our Armed Forces have the best equipment and technology available to them.

The Defensive Aids Sub System includes Electronic Support Measures, missile warning, on-board electronic countermeasures and towed radar decoys.

The Typhoon force is currently operationally based at RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire, RAF Lossiemouth in Scotland and the Falkland Islands.

Press release: Sutton Coldfield angler fined for fishing illegally

On 4 July 2017 at Nuneaton Magistrates' Court, Matthew Hitches of Harvest Fields Way, Sutton Coldfield was fined £220 for fishing without a licence. Hitches was also ordered to pay costs of £580.17 and a victim surcharge of £30 following a prosecution by the Environment Agency.

The offence took place on 17 September 2016 at Kingsbury Water Park.

At his initial hearing on 25 April, Hitches, aged 40, entered a plea of not guilty which forced the case to go to trial. This accounted for the high costs awarded in this case. Hitches failed to attend the court for his trial and the case against him was proved in his absence.

Andrew Eardley from the Environment Agency said:

The majority of anglers fish legally. The minority of anglers that fail to buy a fishing licence are cheating their fellow anglers and the future of the sport.

An annual licence costs just £30. It seems ridiculous that anglers risk significant fines and costs, a criminal conviction and the loss of their fishing equipment for such a small fee.

Money from fishing licence sales is invested in England's fisheries and is used to fund a wide range of projects to improve facilities for anglers, including protecting stocks from illegal fishing, pollution and disease; restoring fish stocks through re-stocking; eradicating invasive species; and fish habitat improvements. Licence money is also used to fund the Angling Trust to provide information about fishing and to encourage participation in the sport.

You need a valid Environment Agency rod licence to fish for salmon, trout, freshwater fish, smelt or eel in England. Buying a rod licence is easy, simply visit [buy a rod licence](#) on GOV.UK.

Anyone witnessing illegal fishing incidents in progress can report it directly to the Environment Agency hotline on 0800 80 70 60. Information on illegal fishing and environmental crime can also be reported anonymously to Crime stoppers on 0800 555 111.