

News story: New Director General of Customer Strategy and Tax Design announced

Ruth is currently Director for Customs and Indirect Tax, and will take over her new role from interim Director General David Richardson on his planned retirement later this summer.

Ruth said:

I'm absolutely delighted to have this opportunity to lead Customer Strategy and Tax Design and join HMRC's Executive Committee. I know first-hand what important work our group does every day to help create the best possible tax, customs and payment systems for the UK. HMRC's work to raise revenue to fund vital public services is hugely motivating to me, and my decision in 2016 to join the department was definitely one of the best I ever made.

Thanks to Jim Harra, David, our senior team and so many others across the group, we already have great foundations to build on. I'm keen that over the months ahead we go further in bringing customer insight to the heart of all our work on policy and design, and continue to strengthen our policy partnership with HM Treasury. I'm really looking forward to discussing with teams across the group how we can best approach this next stage together and help make the group an even better place to work.

Chief Executive Jon Thompson said:

Ruth was an exceptional candidate and is absolutely the right person to take forward this important role following David's retirement in July. I'm grateful to David for his leadership over the last few months and look forward to welcoming Ruth to the team in the next few weeks.

Ruth joined HMRC as Director of Indirect Tax in March 2016, and has led on Customs and Indirect Tax since early 2017. Since joining the Civil Service in the 1990s, she has led a range of policy work in different departments including the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), the Department for Transport and the Department of Health.

While at DCLG Ruth worked on housing policy, including leading work to prevent homelessness and repossessions at the time of the credit crunch, for which she was awarded an OBE. She lives in central London with her husband and two sons.

News story: Baroness Williams visits India to strengthen counter-extremism cooperation

Minister for Countering Extremism, Baroness Williams, has held bilateral talks with Indian government ministers and will use a speech in Delhi to outline how closer cooperation with trusted allies is the best way to undermine extremist ideologies across the globe.

Baroness Williams' visit builds on the closer cooperation on counter-terrorism and counter-extremism which Prime Minister Theresa May agreed with Prime Minister Modi during the Indian leader's visit to the United Kingdom in April.

Addressing the Observer Research Foundation conference, Baroness Williams will say:

It is no secret that there are those in nations across the world, who do not share our values of democracy, the rule of law, mutual respect and tolerance of individuals of different faiths and beliefs.

The threat we face from extremists is unprecedented. The internet is enabling them to spread their ideologies at a pace and scale never before seen. Defeating extremism in all its forms is not something any government can, or should, do alone.

Only through close cooperation with trusted allies and partners can we undermine the extremists who wish to do us all harm.

The Minister is set to outline the UK government's strategic approach to countering extremism, which vigorously opposes extremist ideologies in all their forms, whether violent or non-violent, Islamist or far and extreme right wing.

She will also discuss key successes in the UK's approach including establishing the independent Commission for Countering Extremism and creating a network of over 160 civil society groups who challenge extremism in their local areas.

Baroness Williams has also held meetings with Minister of State for External Affairs, MJ Akbar, and Kiren Rijiju, Minister of State for Home Affairs, focused on what more can be done to tackle the threat of extremism in both countries.

The visit follows Prime Minister Modi's successful visit to the United Kingdom in April this year, where he and Prime Minister Theresa May agreed to work in partnership to take decisive and concerted actions against globally-proscribed terrorist organisations. As part of this renewed cooperation, the UK and India will work together to tackle the threat of online radicalisation and violent extremism.

Press release: New merger and takeover rules come into force

Updated: Links to mergers guidance published today now included

- new rules apply to businesses developing military and dual-use technology, computing hardware and quantum technology
- changes to help continue to keep the country safe and maintain UK's global reputation as an open, trading nation
- the measures follow a review of the government's approach to foreign investment and national security

Today (Monday 11 June 2018) the government made changes to the UK's merger regime to recognise the growing importance of small British businesses in developing cutting edge technology products with national security applications.

In order to address changes in the market, the government amended the threshold tests for businesses in the military, dual-use, computing hardware and quantum technology sectors that are most likely to have implications for our security.

Today's changes allow ministers to intervene on certain grounds when the target business's UK turnover is more than £1 million, down from £70 million under the previous rules. They also remove the requirement that a merger or takeover in these sectors lead to an increase in the parties' combined share of supply of relevant goods or services before the government is able to intervene.

Business Minister Richard Harrington said:

These new rules ensure mergers and takeovers in key areas of the economy cannot risk our national security, while maintaining the openness to trade and investment that is underpinned by our modern [Industrial Strategy](#).

The changes follow a consultation launched last year to amend the Enterprise

Act to reform and strengthen the government's powers. Today's new rules are the first step, with broader changes to be announced in a white paper later this year.

The government has today published guidance for businesses to support them in adapting to today's changes:

BEIS: [Enterprise Act 2002: guidance on changes to the turnover and share of supply tests for mergers](#)

CMA: [Mergers jurisdictional thresholds from June 2018](#)

Notes to editors

1. The [National Security and Infrastructure Investment Review green paper](#), published on 17 October 2017, outlined the government's plans to take a staged approach through short and long term measures to reform how it scrutinises national security implications of business transactions. Today's measures are a response to this consultation on amending the Enterprise Act through secondary legislation.
2. The consultation on longer term proposals closed on 9 January. The government will publish a response to this consultation in due course.
3. Ministers can only intervene in mergers and takeovers (foreign or domestic) that give rise to specific public interest concerns of national security, financial stability or media plurality. However, for ministers to be able to intervene, the transaction had to meet certain thresholds. These were that the target company had a UK turnover of over £70 million, or that the merger took the merging parties' combined share of supply to 25% or more (or increased an existing share of supply of 25% or more). There were limited exceptions to this related to some defence and media transactions.
4. The affirmative statutory instrument that comes into force today amends the share of supply test to allow the scrutiny of more mergers in 3 areas: (a) the military and dual-use sector, (b) 2 parts of the advanced technology sector, encompassing computing hardware and quantum technologies. For these areas alone, the instrument amended the share of supply test so that it is met where a merger or takeover involves a target with 25% or more share of supply in the UK, as well as where the deal leads to an increase in the share of supply to, or above, this threshold, which is the previous requirement.
5. The second, negative statutory instrument that comes into force today amends the turnover test to allow the scrutiny of more mergers in the same 3 areas of the economy. The second instrument lowers the level of UK turnover required of the target business from over £70 million to

over £1 million. Both of these instruments have come into force at the same time.

6. The changes, while made for national security-related reasons, also amend the thresholds that allow the independent Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to scrutinise mergers for competition concerns. However, neither the government or the CMA expect that the changes will bring about a material change in the CMA's approach to the assessment of mergers on competition grounds. The CMA have today also published their technical guidance in relation to these changes [Guidance on changes to the jurisdictional thresholds for UK merger control](#).

News story: Transforming public services in Scotland: apply for funding

Public sector organisations in Scotland have challenged innovators to come up with digital solutions to some of the most pressing issues they face today.

These challenges have been issued by the [Scottish Government Digital Directorate](#) in its [CivTech programme](#), which brings together public and private sectors to solve problems with new products and better services.

Organisations could win contracts that are ultimately worth up to £250,000 with their ideas for using technology.

Improving services and experiences

The challenges announced are:

- [Scottish Anti-Illicit Trade Group](#) is looking at how tech can stop illicit trading. The group is seeking ideas for using data to identify or predict trade in counterfeit and dangerous products at a community level
- [Glasgow City Council](#) wants to better connect people and places and address social isolation. Ideas should address how public transport could improve access to services, learning opportunities and employment
- [Stirling Council](#) is seeking ways of using technology to better understanding investment requirements for public buildings – including

repairs, maintenance and property investment – to improve services

- [Scottish Housing Regulator](#) is inviting ideas to increase standards in social rented housing and give tenants a stronger voice in the services they pay for through the use of data
- [Scottish Natural Heritage](#) wants to use tech to enhance the experience of young people with the outdoor environment in Scotland
- [NHS National Services Scotland](#) wants to review how it manages single-use medical products and pharmaceuticals, as well as other medical devices, which could potentially be re-manufactured and re-used
- NHS National Services Scotland is also inviting ideas to make the NHS waiting time system more efficient and effective
- Scottish Government Digital Directorate wants to support employee engagement by improving how they monitor staff satisfaction, happiness and wellbeing
- Scottish Government Digital Planning is looking at how it can develop a world-leading planning system, specifically how technology and data might improve the quality and reach of public engagement
- Young Scot wants to empower young people in their access of technology by ensuring their rights online and off

Funding for the competition is under SBRI (the Small Business research Initiative).

[Learn about SBRI and how it works.](#)

Competition information

- the competition opens on 11 June 2018, and the deadline for applications is at 9 am on 2 July 2018
- it is open to any organisation that can demonstrate a route to market for its idea
- up to 3 contracts of £3,000 will be awarded to initially explore each challenge area
- a contract of up to £20,000 will then be awarded to develop the most promising idea within each challenge. Further funding could be available for field testing and implementation
- successful projects will attract 100% funded development contracts

- applications should be made through [Public Contracts Scotland](#)
- briefing events will be held on 11 June 2018 and 14 June 2018

[Find out more and apply into the CivTech programme.](#)

Press release: UK aid gives emergency medical treatment to world's poorest in deadly heatwave

The UK is providing emergency medical treatment to some of the world's poorest people at risk from a deadly heatwave that has seen temperatures in Pakistan reach as high as 45°C, significantly hotter than the temperature in London today which is expected to reach 24°C.

UK aid is providing relief to up to 30,000 vulnerable people, including children and the elderly, in some of the poorest areas of Karachi, Pakistan, where up to 70 people have already died from heat-related symptoms since mid-May.

UK aid is supporting 30 heat stroke relief camps which are equipped with solar fans, cold drinking water and first aid kits. The camps are also providing spaces for people to keep cool, providing temporary shelters for those at high risk of death or falling critically ill from the extreme temperatures. Specialist medical staff are treating patients with symptoms such as heat exhaustion and heatstroke, which can damage the brain and cause organ failure.

Secretary of State for International Development Penny Mordaunt said:

Our thoughts are with the loved ones of those that have lost lives from these extraordinary temperatures.

UK aid is working hard to save the lives of the most vulnerable people in some of Pakistan's poorest communities, including the elderly and new born babies born during this deadly heatwave.

With temperatures reaching as high as 45°C, our support is providing emergency medical assistance and helping to prevent people falling critically ill in the first place.

Pakistan is one of the UK's top development priorities, with around 60 million people in Pakistan living in poverty meaning nearly 1 in 3 of the population are living on less than 80p a day. Camps have been set up in some

of the region's poorest areas, where many face challenges to their everyday lives including power outages and water shortages.

In 2015, where temperatures were similar to those in parts of Pakistan now, over 1,300 people died. Simple measures, such as providing clean water and keeping people cool, can be the difference between life and death.

The heatwaves come in the holy Muslim month of Ramadhan, increasing the risk of dehydration as Muslims fast during the hours of daylight.

UK aid is also supporting the 'Beat the Heat' campaign to educate up to 150,000 people about how to reduce the risks of falling critically ill to the high temperatures. The campaign will distribute brochures and posters with important advice in communities, and display banners at prominent locations including bus stops, schools, hospitals and main roads.

Notes to editors

The relief activities are a part of DFID's Multi-Year Humanitarian Programme in Pakistan (MYHP). The programme supports responses to natural disasters and helps those displaced as a result of conflict.

The support is being provided through a local partner on the ground, the Health and Nutrition Development Society (HANDS). HANDS has established 30 relief camps in the most densely populated and poverty stricken areas in Lyari Town, Korangi Town, Surjani Town, Nazimabad, Gulshan e Iqbal, Gulstan e Jauher, and Saddar.

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