

Press release: Statement on the merger between Trinity Mirror Plc and Northern & Shell's publishing assets

On 11 April 2018, under section 57(1) of the Enterprise Act 2002, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) formally brought to my attention the acquisition by Trinity Mirror plc of certain publishing assets of Northern & Shell. The CMA considered that the transaction may raise public interest considerations for the Secretary of State under section 58 of the Act. The CMA has also launched an initial investigation into the competition aspects of the merger.

Having considered a broad range of evidence, I have today written to the parties to inform them that I am minded to issue a Public Interest Intervention Notice on the basis that I have concerns that there may be public interest considerations – as set out in the Act – on two grounds that are relevant to this merger that warrant further investigation.

The first public interest ground is the need for free expression of opinion, and concerns the potential impact the transfer of newspapers would have on editorial decision making. In coming to this decision I have given consideration to the issue of formal mechanisms to ensure that editorial independence is maintained at the acquired titles.

The second ground is the need for a sufficient plurality of views in newspapers, to the extent that it is reasonable or practicable. In coming to this minded-to decision I have taken into account that the merged entity would own the largest share of national titles within the UK newspaper market, owning 9 out of 20 national newspaper titles, and become the second largest national newspaper organisation in circulation terms, with a 28% share of average monthly circulation based on circulation figures for 2017 among national titles, including daily and Sunday titles.

Any decision to intervene would require Ofcom to assess and report to me on the public interest considerations and for the Competition and Markets Authority to report on jurisdiction.

In line with the guidance that applies to quasi-judicial decisions, I have invited written representations from the parties and will aim to come to a final decision on whether to intervene in the merger shortly.

[News story: Civil news: further tender opportunities for 2018 contract work](#)

We are providing another opportunity to tender for face to face 2018 civil contracts in the following three categories of law:

- family
- housing and debt
- immigration and asylum

The procurement process is limited to the small number of geographic areas where we wish to secure greater provision.

Who can tender?

The tender process is open to both existing contract-holders and new entrants. It is a single-stage process that will assess:

- an organisation's suitability to contract with us
- their ability to meet our service requirements

Contracts will be procured using a non-competitive process. This will be limited to the categories of law and procurement areas specified above.

All organisations assessed as being suitable and meeting the minimum service requirements will be awarded a contract.

How can I tender?

Tenders must be submitted using the LAA's e-Tendering system – see below. A link is also available on the tender pages of the LAA website.

If you wish to tender then you must submit a response for the relevant invitation to tender (ITT) in the category of work you wish to deliver.

You may also need to submit a response to the selection questionnaire that forms part of this tender opportunity. This will be required if your organisation:

- did not submit a tender for a 2018 Standard Civil Contract as part of

last year's main civil 2018 contracts tender process

- submitted a tender but was excluded at the selection questionnaire stage
- submitted a tender but has a selection questionnaire response which is no longer valid

Organisations which tendered successfully as part of the main civil 2018 contracts tender process and whose circumstances have not changed will need to confirm this. They can do so in their tender response.

Further information

[Civil 2018 contracts tender](#) – to find out more and download the IFA document
[e-Tendering system](#) – to submit your tender

[News story: UK Flags to be flown at full mast for birth of Royal Baby](#)

Flags on UK Government Buildings will fly at full mast on Tuesday 24th April 2018 from 0800 – 2000hrs in celebration of the birth of TRH Duke and Duchess of Cambridge's third child.

Other organisations and local authorities may choose to follow suit. Devolved administrations are responsible for issuing instructions for the flying of the Union Flag on buildings in their estate and others as necessary.

[News story: Crime news: revised AGFS fee calculator and paper forms](#)

We've published a new fee calculator and paper forms for AGFS work in the Crown Court.

Revised fee guidance and documents showing offence bandings have already been made available.

These reflect the new way of calculating criminal advocate payments for Crown

Court legal aid work.

Paper forms should only be used when the Crown Court online billing system is not available.

Further information

[Graduated fee calculators](#)

[AF1: claim for advocate graduated fees](#) – paper form

[Legal aid: crime claim forms](#)

[Crown Court Fee Guidance](#) – to view supporting guidance and frequently asked questions (FAQs)

[Offence bandings in AGFS](#) – to find the correct offence banding for a claim

servicedevelopment@justice.gov.uk – to submit questions about the revised AGFS

Speech: A jobs Brexit

Earlier this week another employment rate record high was broken – the sixteenth record broken since 2010.

Figures released by the Office for National Statistics on Tuesday showed that [since 2010, over 3.2 million more people have moved into work](#) – that's over 1,000 people entering employment a day, every day.

We now have the lowest unemployment rate for 42 years at 4.2%, and additionally wages are now outpacing inflation, meaning more money in people's pockets. This reality is a far cry from the predictions made at the time of the Brexit vote.

In fact the jobs record is extending across the whole of the country, with the employment rate having risen – and the unemployment rate having fallen – in every region of the UK since 2010.

These headline figures don't just sound impressive – they are and should be celebrated.

Jobs transform lives, and each job gives more people the security that comes from a regular wage for them and their family. A job provides for career progression and with it wage progression which benefits and unemployment don't. It is therefore important that the government is prepared for the future, and grasps the opportunities Brexit brings.

And this is exactly what we are doing as we move forward in our progress to leave the European Union, positioning ourselves as a global country that is open to working with the world.

This week we welcomed 52 leaders to London from the Commonwealth – where we discussed the importance of free and fair trade for us all. And with 90% of global growth coming from outside the EU in the coming years it's key that we prioritise/unlock our relationships with these growing economies – boosting our trade links to prosper post-Brexit and delivering jobs and growth at home and for the Commonwealth.

And we have strong foundations to build on. Our manufacturing sector is enjoying its longest unbroken run of growth for 50 years, and order books for British manufacturers are stronger than at any time since August 1988.

With less than a year to go until we leave the EU, our work continues to improve and liberalise trading markets to capitalise on future trends.

With the digital economy growing 32% faster than the wider economy and creating jobs 3 times more quickly, e-commerce offers previously unknown possibilities for SMEs and individuals, particularly women, to take part in the globalised economy. Etsy, the online marketplace, recently announced that 87% of its sellers are women.

Technology has always fundamentally changed the jobs market and this will continue as we see new developments. Just as in the past the employment market adapted to the invention of technologies such as the cash machine, we too need to adapt and embrace new innovations such as artificial intelligence, 3D printing, and virtual reality. Yet, tech also becomes an enabler and allows the jobs market to be far more inclusive – supporting employment across the board.

The pace of change we see in robotics, automation and the rise of social media and the gig economy has introduced seismic and revolutionary changes in the jobs market already which shows no sign of slowing down. Indeed, the World Economic Forum suggests that 65% of children entering primary school today will end up working in a job that doesn't exist yet.

Post-Brexit, we must not only recognise the trading possibilities available, but ensure we, as a nation, are able to unlock the full opportunity they provide. That is why we need to know where the jobs of the future will be, and make sure UK citizens are equipped to benefit. And that is exactly what we are doing. Working across government – and with industry – looking at the growth areas of the future.

For the government the priority is not just about getting people into work, but actively supporting people to progress and develop within their career and changes in career as people re-train throughout their lives. Building up resilience to cope with the pace of change in the jobs market.

We can do that through the new benefit, [Universal Credit](#), providing personalised support through work coaches which is responsive to changes in

employment status.

The world of work is rapidly changing with new jobs emerging all the time- and that is as much due to technological advancements as it is Brexit. However, whilst the former may be the catalyst, it is Brexit that provides the opportunity to cope with these changes.

We need to ensure our labour market remains the envy of the world and that is how we must shape our Brexit vision. Together, we are working across government to ensure we are prepared to support people, places and businesses to adapt to and benefit from new technology and other changes to the world of work.