

News story: Trade unions to face new fines of up to £20,000 for breaking governance laws

Trade unions are set to face new fines of up to £20,000 for breaking governance laws under plans being consulted on by the government.

Under the proposals, the union regulator, the [Certification Officer](#), will be able to issue fines of up to £20,000 for breaking the law including serious breaches of election rules or mismanagement of their political funds.

Currently the Certification Officer cannot impose a financial penalty, instead issuing a declaration or an enforcement order if a union breaches its statutory obligations under the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act.

The new proposed powers the Certification Officer will be able to fine unions for breaches like:

- failing to ensure senior positions are not held by someone with a criminal record
- breaching requirements for elections to senior positions
- mismanagement of political funds

A spokesperson for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy said:

Trade unions exist to represent workers' interests and make decisions which can affect millions of people's lives, so it is right for the government to ensure they are run responsibly.

The proposed powers will make sure unions are properly regulated in the future to ensure they truly represent the interests of their members.

The government is consulting on these powers as agreed during the passage of the Trade Union Act last year.

The majority of the Act's new powers came into force on 1 March, bringing in tougher ballot requirements for industrial action – particularly for important public services like health, education and transport.

This will save more than 1.5 million working hours a year from being lost to undemocratic strike action.

The [consultation on the Certification Officer's powers](#) will run for 6 weeks from 9 April until 21 May.

1. The Certification Officer is responsible for regulating statutory functions relating to trade unions and employers' associations.
 2. The Certification Officer's complaint rulings are published online.
 3. The Trade Union Act which came into force on 1 March, is expected to reduce strikes:
 - on important public services like transport, education and health by 35%
 - in all other sectors from construction to water supply by 29%
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News story: The AAIB have sent a team to a glider accident in Northumberland

[unable to retrieve full-text content]The AAIB have sent a team to Northumberland to investigate an accident involving a glider.

Press release: Foreign Secretary statement on Moscow visit

The Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson, has decided not to visit Moscow as planned on 10 April.

Developments in Syria have changed the situation fundamentally. My priority is now to continue contact with the US and others in the run up to the G7 meeting on 10-11 April – to build coordinated international support for a ceasefire on the ground and an intensified political process. I will be working to arrange for other like-minded partners to meet and explore next steps soon too.

I discussed these plans in detail with Secretary Tillerson. He will visit Moscow as planned and, following the G7 meeting, will be able to deliver that clear and co-ordinated message to the Russians.

We deplore Russia's continued defence of the Asad regime even after the chemical weapons attack on innocent civilians. We call on Russia to do everything possible to bring about a political settlement in Syria and work with the rest of the international community to ensure that the shocking events of the last week are never repeated.

Press release: Joint statement: India-UK energy for growth partnership

India's Minister for Power, New & Renewable Energy, Coal and Mines, Piyush Goyal, and the UK's Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Greg Clark, took forward the commitment of their Prime Ministers for an enhanced Energy for Growth Partnership between the two countries.

The ministers noted over 30 years of UK-India collaboration on energy spanning investment, research, policy, technical and commercial partnerships in the power, renewables, energy efficiency, civil nuclear and oil and gas sectors. The ministers reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen energy cooperation between India and the UK.

Minister Goyal welcomed the UK's ongoing technical assistance and climate financing. The two ministers welcomed the current large scale private sector investments between the two countries in the area of energy.

The UK is the largest G20 investor in India with large investments in energy. India is the third largest source of FDI projects in the UK including in the energy sector. They welcomed the productive discussions of the business round tables held as part of the energy dialogue in which opportunities for new partnerships were explored and they expressed their commitment to deepen business to business engagement including efforts to enhance technological collaboration.

Looking forward, they explored opportunities for new bilateral cooperation on shared strategic energy priorities such as security, affordability and sustainability. Secretary of State Clark announced up to £20m of additional technical assistance funding under the Energy for Growth partnership to support priority areas for collaboration on power, renewables, energy access and efficiency and oil and gas.

On power and renewable energy, the two ministers agreed that priorities will include helping India's power sector companies introduce smart technology to improve performance and reduce losses; support for increased energy efficiency; and work to accelerate deployment of renewable energy including through support at state level on planning for renewable energy. This will build on the existing £10m Power Sector Reform Programme that is focusing on efficient, reliable and sustainable electricity supply, increasing integration of renewable energy into the grid and improving energy access.

The ministers appreciated the strides made by Energy Efficient Services Limited (EESL) by investing in seven energy saving projects in the UK that have been in successful operation for more than two years yielding dividends. They welcomed the opening of operations in the UK by India's EESL.

The two ministers recognised the need for an accelerated rate of investment to meet PM Modi's ambitious energy plans. Secretary of State Clark welcomed the various support mechanisms introduced by Government of India to promote adoption of renewable energy resources including generation-based incentives (GBIs), capital and interest subsidies, viability gap funding (VGF), concessional finance and fiscal incentives. The two ministers welcomed the new instruments for raising finance such as green masala bonds on the London Stock Exchange as well as significant commercial investments in oil and gas and growing investment in renewables by UK companies.

Secretary of State Clark and Minister Goyal welcomed the decision by CDC to establish an independent renewable energy company in India. Secretary of State Clark announced that CDC will invest up to \$100m to support projects in the renewable energy sector. This follows the Economic and Financial Dialogue between UK and Indian finance ministers earlier in the week where green finance was an important focus.

This is in addition to significant UK climate funding through multilateral initiatives, such as the Clean Technology Fund for India that has approved an investment plan of US\$775 million for India, in which UK is the largest investor.

The two ministers reaffirmed their governments' commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Paris Agreement to tackle global climate change and welcomed the early entry into force of the Agreement in 2016. They noted that the Paris Agreement calls for low carbon growth and India and the UK will work together to make the most of the opportunities this brings.

The ministers also emphasised the vital importance of research and innovation on energy and reaffirmed their government's commitment to continued excellence with impact in this area. India and the UK are building on years of partnership including through the Newton-Bhabha programme. They welcomed wide-ranging jointly funded Research Council UK projects, spanning solar energy, bio-energy, a Joint Virtual Centre on Clean Energy with India's Department of Science and Technology. They also noted the long running collaboration in civil nuclear with India's Department of Atomic Energy including a fourth phase of research projects planned to be taken forward in 2017 and the MoU for cooperation with India's Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership (GCNEP).

Press release: Revenge Porn Helpline Given Further Funding

A helpline dedicated to supporting victims of revenge porn is to get additional funding, the Minister for Women, Equalities and Early Years,

Caroline Dinenage announced today.

The Revenge Porn Helpline launched in 2015 to help tackle the problem of people sharing intimate images online as a way of seeking revenge, humiliating or blackmailing individuals.

The service has been funded by the Government since its launch and was given £178,000 to run for two years. The service will receive a further £80,000 in 2017-18 to ensure victims continue to receive the support they need.

Since its launch the helpline has taken over 6000 calls. The service supports men and women but is part of a wider government commitment to eliminate violence against women and girls, backed by £100 million funding.

Minister for Women, Equalities and Early Years, Caroline Dinenage said:

Intimate photos or videos should never be shared without a person's consent, let alone be posted online as an act of revenge.

For too long, people felt they had to face this problem on their own but we will not tolerate it. That's why we introduced new laws to make this an offence and set up this helpline to provide people with help and advice.

This funding means we can help hundreds more people to get these images taken down, as well as helping them get the emotional support they might need as victims of this awful crime.

The helpline – run by South West Grid for Learning – links callers with law enforcement and internet companies to get content taken down, as well as providing information on legal help available and their rights.

It was set-up alongside the introduction of a new offence in the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015, covering the sharing of images both online and offline. The offence carries a maximum sentence of up to two years in prison.

A breakdown of calls to the helpline since it was established shows that around 75 per cent seeking advice and support are female and 25 per cent of calls relating to men.

Laura Higgins, Online Safety Operations Manager for the helpline said:

We are absolutely delighted with the Minister's decision to provide continuation funding for the Revenge Porn Helpline. The service has seen an increase in calls in 2017 and there is clearly a need for our specialist advice and support.

Since launching in 2015 we have helped thousands of victims and have received incredible feedback from clients, we are glad that we can continue to do so.

The helpline is available on 0845 6000 459 from 10.00am – 4.00pm, Monday to Friday, and messages left outside these hours will be returned. Emails can be sent at any time to help@revengepornhelpline.org.uk

Notes to editors:

- For further information, please contact the GEO press office on 0207 783 8300.
- For further information from the helpline or for media bids, please contact Laura Higgins on 07899 905638 or laura.higgins@swgfl.org.uk