

Civil news: housing and debt and HPCDS tenders now open

Housing and debt tender

We are inviting tenders to deliver housing and debt contract work from 1 December 2022 until 31 August 2024 in the following procurement areas:

1. City of Kingston upon Hull
2. Cheshire
3. Shropshire
4. Staffordshire
5. South Tyneside
6. Wigan

The opportunity to deliver housing and debt services is open to any organisation that can meet the minimum tender requirements. An organisation does not need to be a current legal aid provider to tender for this opportunity.

We would like organisations to deliver work from 1 December 2022 where possible. But organisations unable to start on 1 December will be able to tender to start delivering work from a later date.

There is no limit to the number of contracts that can be awarded to deliver housing and debt services in a procurement area.

Applicants can bid to deliver housing and debt services in a procurement area through an office that is either a:

- permanent presence in the procurement area, or a
- part-time presence in the procurement area

HPCDS tender

We are also inviting tenders to deliver services in the following Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme (HPCDS) areas from 1 December 2022 until 29 April 2023:

1. Basildon
2. Crewe
3. Hull
4. Medway and Maidstone
5. Stafford
6. Walsall

Services will start on 1 December 2022. However, organisations unable to deliver work from 1 December can tender to start delivering work from a later date.

Organisations may bid for housing and debt contract work and/or HPCDS contract work through this procurement process. They are not required to bid for both housing and debt and HPCDS.

However, organisations bidding for an HPCDS contract must hold, or successfully bid for as part of this procurement process, a 2018 Standard Civil Contract. This needs to include authorisation in the housing and debt categories of law.

When awarding HPCDS contracts preference will be given to organisations:

- with recent and relevant experience of delivering HPCDS services
- with an office in the corresponding housing and debt procurement area
- able to start delivering work on the contract start date

The Legal Aid Agency (LAA) is seeking to award one contract for each of the HPCDS areas listed above.

How to apply

Tenders must be submitted using the LAA's eTendering system.

Tender deadline

The tender opens on 17 October 2022 and closes at noon on 7 November 2022.

Further information

[Civil tender activity 2022](#) – to find out more and download documents

[eTendering system](#) – to submit your tender

British Embassy Ashgabat organises Climate and Eco-Festival

The British Embassy in Ashgabat worked alongside young climate activists, volunteers and Turkmen eco-blogger, Gulnara Tayjanova to organise the festival, which took place on 9 October.

The festival welcomed everyone of all ages and featured an array of interesting eco-friendly activities. These included live entertainment, eco-friendly workshops for children, climate quizzes, flash mob dances, fun games, music and songs, guest speakers and presentations. There was also a screening of Sir David Attenborough's film "A Life on Our Planet".

Deputy Head of Mission of the British Embassy to Turkmenistan, John Hamilton opened the festival:

There is no doubt that climate change is a defining challenge facing our planet. Some climate change is now irreversible and our ability to influence the future has been reduced. But there is no doubt that we can avoid the worst if we act now.

All of you here today our valuable contributors to dealing with climate change. We are all agents of change – whether it's through education, through use of science and technology, or by being innovators. Everybody can make an important difference by taking individual action in their own day-to-day lives.

Throughout the day, visitors learnt how to recycle and re-use plastic products, as well as how to manage waste. Guests also had the chance to taste and make vegan food, learn how to weave plastic rugs, and meet likeminded people and share their experience of being more eco-friendly. Eco-bags were also for sale at the event.

The festival was free to attend, but participants were asked to bring one used plastic bottle per person as an “entry fee”. Visitors could also bring toys, clothes and animal food for donation.

As a result, hundreds of people visited the festival with an intention to learn how to contribute to a more sustainable and green world. The climate and eco-celebration ended with an awarding ceremony for the speakers, activists, volunteers and the competition winners.

[£15 million investment in satellite communications from UK Space Agency](#)

Science Minister Nusrat Ghani has unveiled a [new £15 million fund](#) for UK businesses to revolutionise satellite communications technology.

The competition, running until next spring, is open to organisations developing ambitious technologies across the satellite communications ecosystem. It will prioritise customer needs, support sustainable growth and catalyse further investment into the UK space sector, which already employs 47,000 people.

Ideas can focus on creating entire new satellite constellations, ground systems, or delivering new services to customers, and will be funded through the UK Space Agency's leading role in the European Space Agency (ESA) Advanced Research in Telecommunications Services (ARTES) programme.

This new funding package is announced as the Science Minister travels to Rome, Italy, in her first space-focused visit overseas to meet ESA Director General Josef Aschbacher.

The meeting comes ahead of the ESA Council of Ministers (CMIN22) next month where the UK and other member states will negotiate their future contributions to ESA for priority space projects and missions.

Science Minister Nusrat Ghani said:

I am proud to be representing the UK space sector as we discuss our ambitions ahead of the ESA Council of Ministers next month. There are a series of important programmes on the table and I want to harness opportunities in space to grow the UK economy, create jobs and inspire young people into STEM careers.

We're also making new funding available now to strengthen the UK's position as a world leader in the satellite communications market, and I look forward to seeing the results of the competition.

The £15 million fund comes as a new report shows every £1 invested in ESA generates an overall return of £11.80 for the UK economy.

The [Impact Evaluation of UK Investment in the European Space Agency](#) also shows the UK is in the top three nations in terms of scientific output, with the USA and Germany. This is a measure of the publication rate per every £1 invested among key space-faring countries.

The UK's role in ESA is an important part of delivering on the government's ambitious National Space Strategy. The UK committed £374 million per year over five years to ESA in 2019 and this report looks at the impact of that investment in 2020 and 2021.

The ARTES programme is one of the UK Space Agency's key commercial drivers for UK space sector growth and includes projects such as Eurostar Neo. UK involvement, which is expected to bring a 20:1 return on investment, will see new geostationary satellites developed by UK-based Airbus launched into space to provide better broadcast, internet and communications services around the world.

Dr Paul Bate, Chief Executive of the UK Space Agency, said:

Our ESA membership delivers huge advantages to the UK, by catalysing investment into the sector, backing innovative companies, and providing access to new missions and capabilities

such as the James Webb Space Telescope.

As a founding member of ESA, UK space organisations benefit from access to world-class facilities in the UK and Europe, the expertise of ESA's 3,000 staff, and close links to the wider international space community, including other space agencies like NASA.

This new report demonstrates how our participation in ESA translates into real results for the UK economy and continues to play an important role in meeting our national space ambitions.

£6.4 million boost for employers to support disabled people

- Drive to create more inclusive work environments and equip employers with advice on how people from all backgrounds can thrive at work and grow the economy
- Businesses and disability groups invited to test and shape new service which supports employers to employ more diverse and inclusive workforces

Thousands of businesses across the UK will benefit from a new £6.4 million online service to help employers better support disabled people and those with health conditions in the workplace.

The early test version of the [Support with Employee Health and Disability service](#) provides essential information about supporting and managing employees with disabilities or health conditions at work.

Any employer can access the service, which provides free advice on how to manage staff who may be in or out of work with a disability or long-term health condition in a user-friendly online Q&A format.

The service is aimed at smaller businesses, many of which do not have in-house HR support or access to an occupational health service and will help them to build more diverse and inclusive workforces.

The new service also covers potential changes an employer could make to help them return to and stay in work, supporting a government drive to boost numbers of people in employment and ensuring everyone has the opportunity to benefit from being in work.

Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Claire Coutinho said:

Since 2017 we have seen one million more disabled people in work,

beating our target by five years. Now we want to go even further by giving more employers the tools and information they need to ensure disabled people and those with health conditions can succeed in the workplace.

As the new Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, there is no end to my ambition to build on the success of the Department by making sure disabled people have the same opportunities as everyone else to start, stay and succeed in work.

UK Government Minister for Scotland David Duguid said:

This will be a really valuable service for employers to help disabled people and those with health conditions start, stay and succeed in work. I encourage businesses across Scotland to use the UK Government backed online system and create more inclusive work environments.

The site is currently in test mode, with businesses and disability groups invited to have their say through a short online survey, to help shape the future of the service.

The site will be constantly updated and improved over the next three years, informed by feedback given from the survey

The service has been designed to give employers easy access to the advice they need to create the best environments for their staff with disabilities or long-term health issues, so that anyone from any background can start, stay and succeed in work.

Once fully developed, the service will also help employers understand their legal obligations, including how to make adjustments for disabled people and those with health conditions.

Over the next three years, the government will invest £1.3 billion in employment support for disabled people and people with health conditions. This money will go towards building up existing provision, including expanding employment support, to grow the economy and help people with the cost of living.

Further Information

- The new online service is a direct response to the government's 2019 consultation, 'Health is everyone's business', in which employers asked for joined-up advice on supporting health in the workplace that is easier to find and act upon.
- The Support with Employee Health and Disability service is available online here – [Support with employee health and disability – GOV.UK](#)

dwp.gov.uk

- The website is the first public version of the service and is part of an almost £6.5 million (£6.428 million) programme of work to help employers support and manage employees with disabilities or health conditions.
- The latest figures show the number of disabled people in employment has increased by 1.3 million since 2017, delivering on a government goal to see one million more in work by 2027.
- The 10-year employment goal was a government manifesto commitment originally set in 2017 to break down barriers for disabled people and those with health conditions and to build more diverse and inclusive workforces.

Media enquiries for this press release – 0115 965 8781

VMD Currently Experiencing Technical Issues

News story

Due to current technical issues some VMD services are currently unavailable.



Due to technical issues the following services are currently unavailable. Services through VMDS are unaffected.

- Special Import Service
- Export Certificates
- Animal Adverse Reaction Reporting
- Human Adverse Reaction Reporting
- Microchip Adverse Event Reporting
- Product Information Database

Along with access to the following Registers:

- Register of SQP Retailer Premises

- Register of SQPs
- List of Accredited Internet Retailers
- Register of Specific Manufacturing Authorisations – AVAs
- Register of Specific Manufacturing Authorisations – NFABBA, ESCCA
- Register of Veterinary-only GMP sites

We will update this message once they are available again. We apologise for any inconvenience.

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