

UN Human Rights Council 51: UK statement following Putin's annexation of four Ukrainian regions

The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action stressed the importance of democracy for the enjoyment of human rights. And it states, in the clearest terms, that democracy is based on the freely expressed will of the people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives.

Yet what we have seen last week in Ukraine sought to make a mockery of these long-recognised principles. Putin's sham referenda must be seen for what they are: a desperate attempt to justify an unprovoked and illegal land grab of sovereign Ukrainian territory. A blatant continuation of the Kremlin's playbook, as seen before in Crimea in 2014. And a clear violation of international law.

This is not democracy, nor the will of the Ukrainian people. This is a farce – carried out with complete disregard for Ukraine's legal and constitutional framework, and down the barrel of a gun.

Let me be clear: the United Kingdom will never accept the regions of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia as anything other than Ukrainian territory.

Mr President,

The principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, so central to the UN Charter, are principles which all of us have a responsibility to uphold. As the UN Secretary General said last week, Putin's decision to proceed with the annexation of these regions has no legal value and must be condemned in the strongest terms.

We call on the international community to join us in unequivocally rejecting Russia's attempts to illegally annex Ukrainian territory, and to restore the ability of all people in Ukraine to express their will in a free and democratic society.

Thank you.

Offenders to face mandatory testing to

cut drug-fuelled crime

- new enhanced tests will detect more drugs to tackle substance abuse and cut crime
- offenders who fail tests face being recalled to prison

Thousands of offenders will face compulsory drug testing after release from prison to help keep them clean and cut drug-fuelled crime.

From today (3 October 2022), offenders supervised in probation hostels, known as Approved Premises, will be randomly tested for 14 different types of drugs as part of a £1.2 million initiative to reduce reoffending.

Offenders whose drug habits are directly linked to their crimes, such as heroin addicts, will be legally required to take a urine test up to once a week to prevent their addiction from spiralling into further crimes. All other offenders will be tested at least twice whilst being supervised in Approved Premises.

New enhanced tests will also make it easier to spot a range of drugs including heroin, cocaine and synthetic substances like Spice, with around 30,000 tests being carried out each year.

Those who test positive will be required to undergo intensive drug treatment or face being recalled to prison.

These changes were first introduced as a Private Members Bill by Rob Butler MP, who recently became Prisons and Probation Minister.

Rob Butler, Prisons and Probation Minister, said:

I've seen first-hand how drug addiction is too often at the heart of criminal activity and I have campaigned to change that.

This mandatory testing will act as a deterrent to anyone tempted to abuse drugs again, help cut crime and make our communities safer.

Illegal drug use costs the taxpayer nearly £22 billion each year, including NHS, prison and police costs. Clamping down on drug use will help break the cycle of crime which addiction causes.

This type of testing has been successfully rolled out in dozens of Approved Premises in England and will now be expanded across the whole estate by spring 2023.

'Ian', an offender currently housed in an Approved Premise, said:

Before I got clean from drugs, my life was chaotic, and I would do

anything to get my next hit.

Regular testing in Approved Premises will reduce drug deaths and give people something to focus on and work towards.

At first, I was worried about being tested for fear of being recalled to prison but it was an incentive for me to stay clean, rebuild broken trust with family and loved ones and start applying for jobs so I can look for my own place.

The initiative represents one of the largest expansions of drug testing in the Probation Service and supports the government's wider 10-year Drugs Strategy which is backed by £900 million of extra investment.

As part of this, the government is investing £120 million to roll out three pilot substance misuse problem-solving courts in the community to make offenders face their addictions. The investment will help establish 18 new drug recovery wings ensuring prisoners tackle their addiction head-on or face tough consequences – including further time in jail where necessary.

Approved Premises are used by the Probation Service to closely supervise and support offenders after their release from prison.

Crime news: welcome pack and resources for 2022 crime contract

We are making resources available on GOV.UK to help providers when delivering work under the new 2022 Standard Crime Contract.

These include a welcome pack which explains the contents of the 2022 Standard Crime Contract and gives support for new providers.

What resources can providers access?

- 2022 crime contract specification and standard terms
- provider welcome pack
- new versions of guidance

Where can I view contract changes?

The 2022 crime contract includes changes and updates in a range of areas. These are detailed in the Standard Crime Contract 2022 available for download on GOV.UK. The specification changes include:

- duty solicitor engagement requirements – section 6
- pre-charge engagement – section 9.113-9.137

- gang injunctions and associated civil work – section 13.47-13.53
- committal proceedings in civil court venues – section 10.193 – 10.199

Length of contract

The new 2022 contract governing the provision of criminal legal aid services takes effect from 1 October 2022 for a period of one year. It is subject to extensions of up to 2 years.

Amended forms and guidance

Minor amendments have been made to the following forms and guidance documents to include relevant 2022 Standard Crime Contract references:

1. Criminal Bills Assessment Manual
2. Criminal Legal Aid Manual
3. CWA codes guidance (guidance for reporting crime lower work)
4. Crown Court fee guidance
5. CRM2 application for advice and assistance form
6. CRM7 non-standard fee contract work assessment form

Further information

[Standard Crime Contract 2022 welcome pack](#)

[Standard Crime Contract 2022 specification](#)

[Standard Crime Contract 2022 standard terms](#)

[Criminal Bills Assessment Manual](#)

[Criminal Legal Aid Manual](#)

[CWA codes guidance \(guidance for reporting crime lower work\)](#)

[Crown Court fee guidance](#)

[CRM2 application for advice and assistance form](#)

[CRM7 non-standard fee contract work assessment form](#)

[Criminal Legal Aid Review – MOJ consultation hub](#)

[Attorney General's Guidelines on Disclosure 2020](#)

[Samir Parkash appointed interim CEO of](#)

UK Export Finance

Press release

Samir is set to lead the UK's award-winning export credit agency and help British exporters access the finance they need to grow overseas and create jobs in the UK.



UK Export Finance (UKEF) has today announced Samir Parkash has been appointed as interim Chief Executive Officer (CEO). He takes over from Louis Taylor who has joined the British Business Bank.

Samir has served as UKEF's Chief Risk Officer since 2018 and has over 30 years of experience in the banking and financial services sector. He will serve as interim CEO while the appointment process for a permanent CEO is underway.

Samir Parkash, interim CEO at UKEF said:

I'm honoured and delighted to take on the role as interim CEO and lead a department that grows the economy, supports jobs, and strengthens international trade. UKEF has had an excellent performance in recent years. Our guarantees, insurance and lending make more exports possible. I look forward to continuing to put UKEF at the forefront of the government's plan to boost businesses and the economy.

The range of support available to exporters from UK Export Finance ensures that access to finance and insurance is available to UK exporters with ambitions to grow overseas.

In the last financial year, UKEF issued £7.4 billion in support of UK exports. This put money into people's pockets and provided job security for British workers, growing the UK economy by £4.3 billion (GVA) and supporting an estimated 72,000 UK jobs.

James Bowler, Permanent Secretary at the Department for International Trade

said:

Samir will provide both incredible expertise and continuity in this interim period. I am grateful he has stepped up to ensure UKEF remains focused on delivering the world-class service it is internationally renowned for.

Published 3 October 2022

Vast former industrial sites set to be one of UK's largest urban nature reserves

- The Flashes of Wigan and Leigh set to become one of the biggest urban nature reserves with new declaration
- 738-hectare green beacon close to major urban areas will provide access to nature for over 300,000 local people
- Nationally important habitat will help protect rare willow tits, bitterns and water voles

A former industrial wasteland which is now a nationally important site for rare wildlife such as willow tit and bittern is set to become one of England's largest urban nature reserves.

The Flashes of Wigan and Leigh – a 738-hectare area of species-rich wetland, meadows and woodlands – will today (3 October) join England's network of National Nature Reserves.

The designation, which will be the first in the Greater Manchester area, recognises the incredible transformation of the Flashes over the last 100 years. Lakes formed as a result of mining subsidence became home to wildlife like the 'booming bittern' as natural recolonisation and large-scale reclamation works healed the scars of industry.

The former industrial landscape is declared not only for its importance in protecting wildlife and natural capital but for its recreational value to the community. It is hoped the site, which is home to a variety of pursuits from fishing to cycling, nature walks and birdwatching, will provide new opportunities for sustainable tourism and visits from local residents and those further afield.

The new protected reserve will create an oasis for nature, with Wigan also now recognised as one of the greenest urban boroughs in the United Kingdom.

The mosaic of shallow open water and wetland habitats (swamp, reedbed, tall herb fen, wet marshy grassland and wet woodland) supports a rich diversity of birds and other species. This includes over 52 pairs of willow tit, accounting for approximately 2% of England's population, as well as the heron-like bittern, water voles and great crested newts.

Natural England Chief Executive, Marian Spain said:

National Nature Reserves help reconnect people with our natural world, providing much needed opportunities to explore our incredible landscape for our health and wellbeing.

A healthy natural environment and economic growth go hand in hand. By working together to build strong partnerships such as those we see here in the Flashes of Wigan and Leigh, we can provide space for rare species and provide vital greenspace. That will make Wigan and Leigh great places to live and great places to do business in, so helping to attract inward investment.

The unique wetlands in Wigan and Leigh were forged by nature reclaiming former industrial land. Today's designation demonstrates how it is possible to reverse the decline in nature.

Nature underpins the British economy with our natural capital estimated in 2019 to be worth £1.2 trillion. The site will benefit over 300,000 people who live locally to the area, making sure communities and young people have accessible outdoor space for health, recreation, and wellbeing.

Working in partnership with communities has been key to realising this new National Nature Reserve. Declared by Natural England with Wigan Council, Lancashire Wildlife Trust and Forestry England, the NNR brings together a total of 13 sites, including Wigan Flashes, Amberswood, Three Sisters, and Bickershaw Country Park. It also includes Viridor woodland, planted by Forestry England just over 20 years ago.

National Nature Reserves were established to protect some of the most important habitats for vulnerable species, and to provide 'outdoor laboratories' for research. They create vital opportunities for the public, schools, and specialist interest groups to experience wildlife first-hand and to learn more about nature conservation .

This year is the 70th anniversary of the creation of England's first nature reserve – highlighting a long history of restoring nature and helping to bring green space and wildlife to everyone.

There are now 220 National Nature Reserve sites, spanning a total of more than 103,000 hectares. These nature hotspots are key to efforts to restore nature across England, and will play a key role in the nation's nature recovery network in line with the Government's key target to halt the decline in wildlife populations by 2030.