

# £400,000 boost for retirement saving trials

## News story

The DWP has announced a £400,000 funding boost for schemes that help people take stock of their health, skills and wealth as part of later life planning.



With the pandemic impacting people's lives in different ways, many will already be reviewing their current situation – including those wanting a fuller working life, those able to put more into their savings after a period of working from home, or those looking to improve their resilience for the future.

At a time where many are worried about job security, the “mid-life MOTs” will enable people to identify the skills they will need for the job journey they want, helping them make more informed choices and build their future financial resilience.

The new funding will be given to ten organisations to develop and trial the locally-led MOTs. This initiative will help workers to plan for the future they want.

Minister for Pensions and Financial Inclusion, Guy Opperman, said:

It's no secret I am a huge fan of this idea.

While we started work on this before the pandemic, the last twelve months have brought people's financial resilience into sharp focus – making a mid-life MOT a timely exercise for many.

And it's not just about retirement savings, but also about enabling people to enjoy a fuller working life by helping them understand

the skills they will need to learn along the way.

The trials will help the DWP understand:

- The actions individuals take as a result of undertaking the mid-life MOT;
- The user needs among those most at risk of experiencing long term unemployment;
- The effectiveness of using local delivery channels and how these can complement the Money and Pensions Service (MAPs), the National Careers Service (NCS) and Public Health England (PHE), in supporting individuals with later life planning.

The ten local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) across England could each receive up to £40,000 to develop, and implement, the mid-life MOT trials.

- The ten LEPs to receive grants of up to £40,000 are: Black Country, Coventry and Warwickshire and Greater Birmingham and Solihull (combined application); Heart of the South West; Humber; North East; New Anglia (Norfolk and Suffolk); Worcestershire; Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly; Cambridge and Peterborough; Dorset; and Greater Manchester.

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 3267 5144

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## [Half-masting of flags following the death of President Magufuli of Tanzania](#)

News story

It is with great regret that we learn of the death of President Magufuli of Tanzania.



Half-masting instructions:

Union flags will usually be half-masted on all Government buildings in the UK on the day of death of a serving Commonwealth Head of State. Flags will therefore be flown at half mast on UK Government Buildings today until 20:00hrs.

Other organisations and local authorities may follow suit.

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## [Geospatial Commission announce location data ethics project](#)

The Geospatial Commission, with support from UK Research and Innovation's [Sciencewise](#) programme, has launched a public dialogue to better understand views from members of the public about the use of location data.

When location data is linked with other data about people and the world we live in, we can gain important insights and create new services that greatly improve how we live, work and travel. With these new data applications and opportunities, there are emerging privacy and ethical considerations. So that we can continue to benefit from widespread use of location data, it is important that data is used in a way that mitigates concerns and retains public confidence.

Partnering with public dialogue and data specialists Sciencewise, [Traverse](#) and the [Ada Lovelace Institute](#), the new project will open a conversation with members of the public to gather evidence on public perceptions about location data use. An Oversight Group will provide expert support and quality assurance from a diversity of views. Findings will help deliver the [UK Geospatial Strategy](#).

Minister of State for the Cabinet Office, Lord True CBE said:

The rapid advancement and increasing use of location data and technologies present great opportunities for the UK to realise significant economic, social and environmental value accompany the rapid advancement and increasing use of location data and technologies. Through developing a dialogue to explore public views about location data, the Geospatial Commission has an important role in supporting the government to remain proactive in maintaining public confidence in how location data is accessed and used.

Tom Saunders, Head of Public Engagement at UK Research and Innovation, added:

I'm very pleased that Sciencewise is supporting the Geospatial Commission in this nationally important project on the ethics of location data use, and look forward to finding out what members of the public think about the opportunities and issues involved.

This public dialogue is part of a programme of work to promote and safeguard the use of location data, which is the first mission of the UK's Geospatial Strategy launched last year. Our aim is to develop guidance on how to unlock value from sensitive location data while mitigating ethical and privacy risks.

### **About Public Dialogue**

Public dialogue is an approach to involving citizens in decision making. Dialogues bring together a diverse mix of citizens with a range of views and values, and relevant policy makers and experts, to discuss, reflect and come to conclusions on complex issues. For more information see [ScienceWise FAQs](#). Traverse will recruit members of the public later this year for the workshops.

### **Members of the Oversight Group**

John Pullinger (Chair) and previously the UK's National Statistician

Andy Gregory, Home Office

Ben Lyons, Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation

Charles Kennelly, Esri

Chris Wroe, Telefonica (02)

David Leslie, Alan Turing Institute

Ellis Parry, Information Commissioner's Office

Jagdev Singh Virdee, Independent Consultant

Jeni Tennison, Open Data Institute

Josh Berle, Mastercard

Marcus Grazette, Privitar

Mick Ridley, Global

Phillipa Sharma, Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

Professor Shannon Vallor, Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI), University of Edinburgh

Professor Yves-Alexandre de Montjoye, Imperial College London

Renate Sampson, Which?

Simon Whitworth, UK Statistics Authority

Sue Bateman, Government Digital Service

Toby Wicks, UNICEF

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## [Government launches procurement exercise to support self-isolation compliance](#)

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## [Home building figures show increase in new housing starts](#)

- Latest figures show a sustained period of growth in the number of homes being built.
- 11% increase in housebuilding starts in London.
- Houses make up 79% of all new builds – highest since 2000 to 2001 as the

government demonstrates its commitment to building back better from the pandemic.

The number of homes being built since the lifting of the first period of national coronavirus restrictions continues to rise, latest housebuilding figures published today (18 March 2021) show.

New data shows new housing starts were estimated to be 42,110 in the latest quarter (October – December 2020), a 16% increase on the previous quarter (July – September 2020). New homes completed was at 46,950 in the latest quarter, a 4% increase compared to the last quarter, and the highest completions figure since its peak in the March quarter 2007.

Today's figures also show an increase in housebuilding starts in London with 13,460 in 2020, an increase of 11% from 2019.

In addition, the figures highlight that in 2019 to 2020 houses made up 79% of all new build dwellings – the highest proportion since 2000 to 2001.

The figures further reflect the housing and construction industry's resilience and measures they have taken to keep building sites open, in line with public health advice.

Housing Secretary RT Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

Today's figures show a steady increase in the number of new housing starts and the number of new homes built, highlighting a sustained period of growth in the housing sector as it continues its recovery.

The government has continued to demonstrate its support for the industry throughout the pandemic by enabling construction sites to remain open and operate safely in line with important public health guidance. We've intervened to help the sector bounce back despite all the challenges we've faced.

The latest figures show new build dwelling starts (seasonally adjusted) were estimated to be 42,110 in the latest quarter (October – December 2020), a 16% increase on the previous quarter (July – September 2020). New build dwellings completed (seasonally adjusted) was 46,950 in the latest quarter. This is a 4% increase when compared to last quarter, and the highest completions figure since its peak in the March quarter 2007. This continued rise reflects increased construction activity following the lifting of the first period of the UK government COVID-19 national restrictions.

Recent government support for home building includes:

- Setting out an overhaul of the country's outdated planning system to deliver the high-quality, sustainable homes communities need. The proposed changes will be a boost to SME builders who will be key players

in getting the country building on the scale needed to drive our economic recovery, while leading housebuilding that is beautiful and builds on local heritage and character. Recent studies show smaller firms feel the complexities of the planning process and its associated risks, delays and costs are the key challenges they face in homebuilding.

- We have set out an ambitious package of measures to ensure we build the right homes in the right places and level up opportunities across the country. This includes nearly £20 billion of investment in new housing as confirmed in the Spending Review, including over £12 billion of investment in affordable housing and our £7.1 billion National Home Building Fund.
- Our £400 million Brownfield Fund for 7 Mayoral Combined Authorities will deliver much-needed new homes on brownfield land – unlocking 26,000 high-quality homes.
- We have introduced a range of measures, such as allowing builders to seek more flexible construction site working hours with their local councils and extending certain planning permissions that would otherwise lapse, in order to keep the sector moving.
- We are also taking measures to support home buyers – for example stamp duty holiday on house purchases has been extended.