

# News story: Government joins bus companies to celebrate vital form of transport

Major companies across England are today (Friday, 17 May 2019) highlighting the important role buses play in communities as part of #loveyourbus day.

The Department for Transport is joining bus companies across the country to support the initiative, which showcases operators' best practice to encourage more people to travel by bus.

Buses Minister Nusrat Ghani has also written to local authorities and companies today to highlight good work across the country as well as reminding them of the powers they have to take greater control of their area's bus services, such as franchising or enhanced partnerships.

Buses Minister Nusrat Ghani said:

Buses are the most popular form of public transport and play a vital role in communities.

Today is about celebrating the many success stories of rising passenger numbers to inspire further growth in the future – right across the country.

Areas which have seen passenger numbers rise between 2009 and 2018 are Bristol (50%), South Gloucestershire (36%), Reading (31%), Central Bedfordshire (27%), Poole (38%) and Brighton (21%).

The government continues to look at ways to increase bus patronage and has given additional power to local authorities, through the Bus Services Act, to set fares, routes and timetables to give passengers the service they deserve.

Each year the government pays £250 million to support bus services in addition to the £1 billion spent on providing older and disabled people free travel through the bus pass scheme.

In addition, the [Department for Transport announced this year that it was funding an open data platform to enable companies to develop smartphone apps so people will have bus times, locations and fares at their fingertips, giving them more confidence in using buses to help drive up passenger numbers.](#)

To help make buses environmentally friendly, the government has also invested £161.5million to pay for new buses and vehicle upgrades, which has led to more than 5,700 green buses on our roads.

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## Press release: Trustee who stole from miners' charity ordered to repay over £200,000

Trustees that benefitted from the use of charity funds for private building works were guilty of serious misconduct and mismanagement in the running of the charity, a Charity Commission [inquiry](#) has found. A trustee is now disqualified and was ordered to repay funds, resulting in over £200,000 being recovered.

The regulator opened a statutory inquiry into [Nottinghamshire Miners Home](#) in August 2007 after the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) raised concerns that the charity's trading subsidiary, Phoenix Nursing and Residential Home Ltd (PNRHL), may be being misused for the private benefit of trustees A and B and their families. This also brought up wider concerns about Trustees A, B and C's management and oversight of the charity.

The inquiry liaised closely with the SFO and South Yorkshire Police. Commission investigators used powers to obtain information from the banks of NMH, PNRHL, the trustees and the charity's accountant, which revealed that trustees A and B benefitted from £150,000 of charitable funds, through fraudulent invoicing, which were spent on building works carried out at private properties connected to the two trustees.

The Commission provided witness statements to support the prosecution, and gave evidence at the hearing in 2012, which resulted in trustee A being convicted of 14 counts of theft and automatically disqualified from trusteeship. Trustee B was found not guilty, however the Commission maintained that they were responsible for misconduct and/or mismanagement.\*

A claim was made under the Proceeds of Crime Act, and Trustee A was ordered to pay over £200,000 compensation to the charity, including over £50,000 in interest.

### **Protective action**

At the time of opening the inquiry, the charity had informed the Commission that it intended to sell a care home in Lincolnshire which it leased to PNRHL, claiming that it was failing as a result of the decline of the mining industry. Concerned that c. £1.5 million in sale proceeds could be at risk, the inquiry placed legal restrictions on the charity's bank accounts, those of its trading subsidiary and on the charity's solicitor. Both trustees A and B were suspended from their roles, and the Commission appointed an interim manager to take over the management of the charity in 2008.

## **Serious misconduct and mismanagement**

Following interviews and further examination of evidence, the inquiry concluded that all three trustees failed to adequately discharge their legal duties as trustees. They also failed in their responsibility to review the performance of the trading subsidiary in administering the care home.

Trustee A and B's use of charitable funds for private building works and unauthorised personal benefit clearly amounted to serious misconduct and mismanagement in the administration of the charity.

### **Harvey Grenville, Head of Investigation and Enforcement at the Charity Commission said:**

This case involved an appalling and cynical misuse of funds intended for deserving people. Through the diversion of money for personal comfort, vital resources were taken from those they were there to help. Charities exist to improve lives and strengthen society, but the actions of these individuals meant that a community was badly let down.

Our intervention provided vital support to prosecutors, ensured that those responsible faced the consequences of their actions and enabled the sizeable recovery of charity funds. This should send a strong signal that this type of abuse will not be tolerated.

This inquiry protected important charitable assets and ensured that funds could be put to good use for mining communities in Nottinghamshire.

Limitations in the Commission's powers at the time meant it was not able to disqualify trustees B and C because their trusteeships had lapsed by this point. The Commission successfully fought for new powers to address this, which were granted under the Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Act 2016, putting the Commission in a stronger position to disrupt and stop the abuse and mismanagement of charities.

The Commission worked closely with the interim manager and newly appointed trustees to ensure that the recovered and remaining funds could be put to good use. The new trustees selected Nottingham Miners Welfare Trust Scheme (NMWTFS) as their preferred recipient charity. Following due diligence checks by the inquiry £1,142,573 was transferred to NMWTFS to support people connected with the Nottinghamshire area coal field, including vulnerable beneficiaries.

NMH was wound up and removed from the register of charities in January 2017. A full report of the inquiry is available on [GOV.UK](https://gov.uk).

**Ends.**

## **Notes to Editors**

1. The inquiry highlights risks that can arise from charities being closely linked to a non-charitable organisation. No charity should ever use or be used by non-charitable organisations to pursue uncharitable interests. Newly published guidance from the Commission helps equip trustees to manage these types of risks. The guidance is available on [GOV.UK](https://gov.uk)
2. \*As the term of Trustee B's trusteeship had lapsed under the provisions of the charity's governing document, it was not necessary for the inquiry to take action to remove him.

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## **News story: Universities told to stamp out antisemitism on campus**

Universities must do more to stamp out antisemitism on campus following reports of unfair practices that could amount to indirect discrimination, the Universities Minister has said today (17 May).

Chris Skidmore has urged the sector to advance its efforts to tackle unacceptable religious hatred in higher education and is calling on all universities to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism.

The Jewish Leadership Council, Union of Jewish Students and Community Security Trust have raised reports of unfair practices in which Jewish societies have been asked to pay up to £2,000 for their own security at speaker events on campus, which the Universities Minister is concerned may amount to indirect discrimination.

Mr Skidmore met with students yesterday (Thursday 16 May) to hear about their concerns and experiences of antisemitism on campus. In a letter being sent to universities this week, the Minister is calling on all institutions to reject such prejudiced practices, challenging institutions to step up and tackle antisemitism.

### **Universities Minister Chris Skidmore said:**

There is no place in our society for hatred or any form of harassment and it is frankly appalling that the battle against antisemitism still exists.

Free speech is vital to the independence and innovation that

embodies the higher education sector and it must be protected. Not only does it fuel academic thought, but it contributes to a collective feeling of tolerance and acceptance in our universities that challenge injustice.

In this context, it is unacceptable to oblige certain groups of students to incur additional costs because of their race or religion, just to counteract the actions of others.

Institutions like King's College London are already displaying leadership in this area but I expect our universities, as vehicles of change, to show moral leadership and accept the IHRA definition of antisemitism which shows that an institution and its senior leaders are serious about ensuring their campuses are tolerant environments where ideas and debate can flourish but persecution can never take hold.

Universities have a responsibility to ensure students do not face discrimination, harassment or victimisation of any kind and provide a safe and inclusive environment for all students.

[Guidance](#) published in February, led by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, clearly states the legal rights and obligations around free speech for all institutions and student unions (SU). This sets out that universities, student unions and their societies must ensure they do not discriminate in the way they organise events.

The government has also taken steps together with the sector to tackle hate crime and harassment, including through the Office for Students (OfS) which is supporting institutions in their work in the area.

**Chief Executive of the Jewish Leadership Council, Simon Johnson, said:**

Following a recent meeting convened by the JLC with member organisations UJS and CST, we are pleased to see that the Universities Minister will be calling on universities to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism and advising them that unfair charges to Jewish societies on campus for security are unacceptable.

These actions will ensure that there is a safe, welcoming and tolerant environment on UK campuses and we are grateful to the Government for its continuing support for the welfare of Jewish students.

**Campaigns Organiser of the Union of Jewish Students, Daniel**

## **Kosky, said:**

We welcome Universities Minister Chris Skidmore's call for universities to redouble their efforts to tackle antisemitism, including the adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism.

Following our productive meeting with the Minister in April, we are grateful that he has acted on a number of our recommendations, including supporting the removal of prohibitive security costs for Jewish societies, and strengthening freedom of expression guidelines.

Jewish students have long called for institutions to adopt the IHRA definition, and we now expect universities to follow the Government's call. The National Union of Students have recommended they do so and Universities UK has also asked universities to individually consider adoption.

Last year the OfS provided £480,000 for 11 projects tackling religious-based hate crime in higher education. One of the projects, led by King's College London, aims to tackle religious intolerance and includes recognising the needs of religious communities within the university, strengthening reporting mechanisms, supporting new facilities as well as building awareness, understanding and tolerance of different faiths. King's is also one of the first universities to accept the full IHRA definition of antisemitism.

Universities UK (UUK) has set up a taskforce to consider what can be done to address violence, harassment and hate crime on campus, including on the basis of religion. The taskforce published a comprehensive report 'Changing the Culture' in 2016 which included a number of specific recommendations for the higher education sector on antisemitism.

Many universities have made good progress on this, but there is still further to go to implement UUK's recommendations fully. All higher education providers should also have robust policies and reporting procedures in place and investigate and swiftly address reports of hate crime, including any antisemitic incidents that are reported.

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**[Press release: UK crowd-sourced history campaign marks 50 years since the first Moon landings](#)**



Ahead of this weekend's full Moon, the [UK Space Agency](#) and [Arts and Humanities Research Council](#) are asking people across the UK to share their memories of one of the seminal moments of the 20th century – the 1969 Apollo 11 Moon landing – and to tell their stories about how this moment in history has inspired them.

A selection of the submissions to this crowd-sourced history campaign, led by the [UK Space Agency](#) and [Arts and Humanities Research Council \(AHRC\)](#), will be curated and shared with the public on 20 July 2019, marking 50 years since Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landed on the Moon.

The campaign is intended not only to unearth fascinating first-hand memories but to explore how the Moon landings touched almost every aspect of popular culture, from cinema and art, to literature and music.

For anyone who may not have watched the footage live, there is an opportunity to get involved by sharing their stories about how space exploration has inspired them or led to a career in the sector.

Entries could include a grainy photograph of a family huddled around an early television to watch this iconic moment; a scrapbook of newspaper cuttings from July 1969; or a personal account of how the Moon landing has shaped a work of art or led to a lifelong passion for science fiction.

Science Minister Chris Skidmore said:

Ahead of the 50th Anniversary of the Moon landing, I hope people across the UK share their Moon memories, ranging from photos to diary entries, to help give us a unique and fascinating insight into one of the most celebrated moments in our history.

Landing on the Moon was unthinkable at the beginning of the twentieth century, so when Neil Armstrong heralded the moment as, 'one giant leap for mankind,' those words rightly have echoed through the ages.



Through our modern Industrial Strategy, we are backing the UK's thriving space sector so that the young people inspired by this great event of the past will have opportunities to work in the industry's highly skilled, well-paid jobs of the future.

Tim Peake, astronaut at the European Space Agency (ESA) said:

The 1969 Apollo 11 Moon landing was not just a pivotal moment in space exploration, but a defining moment for humanity. Whether you were too young to witness the first footsteps on the Moon, or old enough to see it for yourself, the Moon landing has inspired so many people over the past fifty years.

I hope that this campaign from the Arts & Humanities Research Council and UK Space Agency will not only help people to reflect on the historic and cultural significance of this anniversary, but also inspire the next generation of scientists, engineers and astronauts.

People will be able to submit their memories and personal stories via [moonlandingmemories.com](http://moonlandingmemories.com) and are being encouraged to share them via social media using the hashtag #MoonMemories.

Memories and stories can be uploaded over the next month, with the submission deadline falling on Tuesday 18th June.





Professor Barry Smith, Leadership Fellow for Science in Culture at the Arts & Humanities Research Council said:

When Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landed on the Moon for the first time on the 20 July 1969, the world stopped to watch this history defining moment. It pushed the boundaries of human possibility and led to an incredible explosion in creativity.

To mark the fiftieth anniversary we want to hear people's memories of seeing the footage for the first time, but also what the Moon landings meant to them. From a love of space movies to pursuing a career in astronomy, this crowd-sourced history campaign will reflect on this moment's undeniable role in shaping the world we live in today.

Sue Horne, Head of Space Exploration at the UK Space Agency, said:

As a young child I was, like millions of people around the world, fascinated watching the Apollo 11 Moon landing. I remember our headmistress, who disapproved of television, insisted that the school television was on at lunchtime so we could watch the latest news on this historic event.

The Moon landing was an inspiration to me and it's exciting to think that young people today will be part of the next chapter of lunar exploration, with the UK playing an important role.

I am looking forward to sharing in people's memories of this iconic moment in space exploration and hearing how those small steps are still having a huge impact 50 years on.



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## [Press release: Army harnesses UK bridging innovation](#)

Funding from the Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) has led to a micro SME, based in Devon, attracting their first military order from the Army Rapid Innovation and Experimentation Laboratory (ARIEL); delivering innovative bridging equipment to the Royal Engineers.

At 85% lighter, 80% more compact, and many times cheaper than incumbent Infantry Assault Bridges, EasiBridge, the aptly named bridging concept, is a new range of man-portable, long-span rescue/assault bridges.

DASA invested £77,086.80 in July 2018, tasking EasiBridge to adapt their product range for defence and wider government use. Under the expert guidance of DASA's partner and project technical advisers at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), EasiBridge products have undergone a series of rigorous military trials, deploying on international exercise.

EasiBridge has already commenced work on the order to deliver 3 bridges, 3 conveyors, and 1 footbridge. The equipment will be supplied as trial

structures for the Royal Engineers Trials and Development Unit (RETDU).

Brigadier Kev Copsey, Head of Future Force Development, says:

The Army is embracing emerging technologies and adopting innovation that eases the tasks of our people. We are delighted to be supporting a UK innovator, turning new ideas into military capability and putting it into the hands of soldiers quickly for trials and testing.

The DASA funded EasiBridge project has rapidly proved its credibility, testing a wide range of new gap crossing, force protection and difficult access capabilities. Seven new capabilities were developed, from footbridges to materials-handling conveyors, fence-breaching frameworks to blast-resistant roofing systems – all from one “Super-Kit” of parts, using common, 5-foot ladder sections. The EasiBridge concept has received substantial international enquiries.

Lucy Mason, Head of DASA says:

This is a cross defence innovation success story. By embedding exploitation at the beginning of the innovation process and having the end user in mind throughout, it can lead to faster adoption of innovative ideas into Defence and wider Government. DASA is committed to supporting small businesses with great ideas and providing a platform upon which they can shine; EasiBridge did just this, attracting both UK and international interest.

The defence trials provided further evidence that the innovation could also be adapted for other government uses, particularly for emergency and rescue services. The EasiRoof “Lite”, for example, could offer lower-cost, light-duty roof support for disaster relief or as emergency accommodation.

Stephen Bright, Director, Bright Structures Ltd said:

EasiBridge is the world’s first user-portable, long-span, rescue/assault bridge and I am delighted that the Royal Engineers will be the first military unit to benefit from it. DASA support has been instrumental in developing a whole new range of gap crossing, force protection and specialist access capabilities.

Stephen goes on to say:

I cannot tell you the renewed impetus this project has given us. After 3 years scratching around the wilderness, the last several months have already started to change everything. Exactly what DASA was intended to do, I’m sure.

DASA is continually seeking to develop innovative ideas that have the potential to positively impact the operational effectiveness of the UK's military. EasiBridge development was funded through a DASA open market competition looking for the next 'generation troop protection, access and mobility systems'.