

# Press release: UK and USA agree to continue Mutual Recognition Agreement

An arrangement which helps boost British trade with the US will continue when the UK leaves the European Union, supporting jobs in both countries.

The Mutual Recognition Agreement on Conformity Assessment (MRA) was signed by Her Majesty's Ambassador Sir Kim Darroch and Deputy United States Trade Representative C.J. Mahoney in Washington today (Thursday 14 February).

The agreement will maintain all relevant aspects of the current EU-US MRA when the EU-US agreement ceases to apply to the UK. It helps facilitate goods trade between the two nations and means UK exporters can continue to ensure goods are compliant with technical regulations before they depart the UK, saving businesses time, money and resources. American exporters to the UK benefit in the same way.

Total UK-US trade in sectors covered by the deal is worth up to £12.8 billion, based on recent average trade flows. Of this, the UK exports covered are worth an estimated £8.9 billion- more than a fifth of total UK goods exports to the US. Today's signing marks a crucial step in the important trading relationship between the UK and America, the world's largest economy.

The agreement benefits a range of sectors, including pharmaceuticals. Pharmaceuticals account for around £7.7 billion of UK exports to the US – nearly 18% of total UK goods exports to the US. Other industries that will benefit include the tech sector and telecommunications equipment suppliers.

Similar agreements have been signed in recent weeks with Australia and New Zealand, ensuring continuity and safeguarding revenues for British businesses and consumers.

International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox said:

The UK and the US are the strongest of trading partners and this agreement will allow British and American businesses to keep trading as freely as they do today, without additional bureaucracy.

Our top priority is ensuring continuity for businesses as we leave the European Union and we are signing other agreements in the days and weeks ahead. We look forward to sitting down at the negotiating table with the Americans after we leave the European Union to strike an ambitious new free trade agreement.

This agreement has been welcomed by techUK, who represent more than 900 companies and around 700,000 employees in the UK tech sector.

CEO of techUK, Julian David, said:

This is a positive step to enable trade continuity with the biggest tech market in the world. Manufacturers value the current agreement so it is very good news that they won't now have to seek costly alternative arrangements to get approval for products used in high-end manufacturing, smart electronics and consumer devices.

Ensuring stability in this type of agreement is a strong starting point for the UK as we develop trade links with the USA as part of the Government's support for a new and proactive trade agenda.

Dr Richard Torbett, Executive Director of Commercial Policy: UK and International, at The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry said:

Finalising this MRA provides UK pharmaceutical companies with business continuity by streamlining regulatory processes between the UK and USA post Brexit.

The US is already our largest trading partner outside the EU. Trade between the two countries was worth £184 billion in the year ending Q3 2018 (ONS). The US is also the single biggest source of inward investment into the UK.

The UK is prioritising a new Free Trade Agreement with the US after we leave the EU, and we will publish our response to the public consultations about our negotiation approach shortly.

The UK and US have also signed a Mutual Recognition Agreement on Marine Equipment (MRA) today. This will provide continuity of the effect of the EU-US Marine Equipment MRA when the EU-US agreement ceases to apply to the UK. This means that marine equipment manufacturers will continue only to need certification in one jurisdiction before being able to legally place their equipment on both markets and on board both UK and US flagged vessels.

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## **[Press release: Company director pays cost of staying silent in waste investigation](#)**

Craig Hands, a director of Warwickshire Wood Chip Ltd, was identified as a waste broker during an investigation across the south east into illegal waste activities.

He was legally required to supply information requested by an investigating officer but repeatedly failed to do so, holding up investigations.

At Peterborough Magistrates' Court on 22 January 2019, Hands, who pleaded guilty, was fined £1,500 and was ordered to pay £2,710 costs and £120 victim's surcharge.

Wendy Foster, prosecuting for the Environment Agency, said that an investigating officer was authorised to exercise powers under section 108(4)(k) of the Environment Act to look at documents/records that were relevant to an investigation and warned of the offence of obstruction.

"From the beginning of July 2018 to the present date, various reasons have been put forward to explain why documents have not been provided," she told the court. "No documents have ever been received."

Magistrates told the court:

We consider this matter as serious. The Environment Agency does a very good job and they need our full support.

Hands, aged 52, of Cauldwell Lane, Bitteswell, Lutterworth, was taken to court to answer a charge under section 110 (2) (b) of the Environment Act 1995 that: between 19 July 2018 and 20 October 2018 without reasonable excuse you did fail to provide facilities or assistance or any information or to permit any inspection reasonably required by an authorised person in the execution of his powers or duties under by or virtue of section 108 of the Environment Act 1995.

Hands entered a guilty plea at an early opportunity and apologised for the offending.

Phil Henderson, Environment Agency crime team leader, said:

This case goes to show that you cannot ignore the law and the people whose job it is to enforce it. We will take action when people deliberately hold up our investigations and others should take note of this.

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**[News story: Government stakeholders endorse DASA's safety at sea competition – Get the Ship in Shape:](#)**

# accounting for, and tracking, personnel

DASA's [Get the Ship in Shape competition](#) is part of a wider programme being undertaken by the Royal Navy to improve accounting and tracking of personnel on board Queen Elizabeth Class vessels to ensure provision of Duty of Care in emergency situations. The programme consists of support and preparatory work to permit the delivery of an innovative solution into service as fast as practicable.

Internal government stakeholders from across the [Ministry of Defence](#) (including the Royal Navy, the [Defence and Security Accelerator](#), the [Defence Science and Technology Laboratory](#), [Defence Equipment & Support Ships Team](#) and the Directorate of Engineering & Safety Technology Office) gathered at HMS Queen Elizabeth to endorse the future plan for the programme. The group highlighted the importance of the programme in order to ensure Duty of Care for those on board by improving the current system.

Attendees discussed the future plans and the project timelines before touring problem areas within the ship that the competition addresses. The stakeholders identified the key practical issues which need to be addressed by the potential technological solutions, including:

## **The Gangway and Pegboards**

Accounting for the personnel on board at any one time is undertaken primarily by the use of pegboards with a particular line for each member of Ship's company, a T-card holder (for accredited visiting contractor / shore support staff) and a visitor log (for all other visitors).

## **Doors**

A range of different doors are able to provide access to and from decks. Correctly identifying where and when personnel have joined or left the ship is of prime importance. Doors may be of different sizes, shapes, and with differing placement within the ship.

## **Boat Well and Rib Access**

Access and egress are also possible via smaller craft and pontoons. In Man Overboard situations boats may be deployed rapidly to recover persons in the water. Any accounting tool must not impede the speed of the response and must be able to account for the on boarding of additional persons recovered from the water.

The [Get the Ship in Shape competition](#) closes on 08 March 2019 at midday (GMT), proposals must be submitted through DASA's [Submission Service](#).

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## [Press release: Mailing Medicine Man sentenced for illicit supply](#)

Morgan was sentenced to 2 years imprisonment, suspended for 2 years for each count, to run currently. He had previously pleaded guilty to all counts.

His illicit operation was investigated by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, and investigators seized 1,914 packages of medicine containing 20,563 doses. They were alerted to his illegal activity by the Royal Mail who established that Morgan failed to pay the full postage on packages which were found to contain medicines.

The crimes were committed between 17 May 2015 and 29 November 2016

The medicines Morgan was supplying included finasteride, which is used to treat hair loss, and Kamagra an unlicensed erectile dysfunction treatment. Unlicensed medicines can have many side effects including increasing the risk of heart attacks.

The supply of medicines from sources outside the regulated supply chain represents a significant public health risk and Morgan showed a complete disregard for the public's safety and well-being.

Tariq Sarwar, MHRA's Head of Operations, said:

Our message is clear: illegally supplying prescription only and unauthorised medicines is a serious criminal offence.

MHRA officers have worked to arrest those involved in this case and we will continue to track down and prosecute people endangering public safety.

Those selling medicines illegally are exploiting innocent and vulnerable people to make money and have no regard for the public's health or welfare.

Be careful when buying medicines online, and if you are in any doubt about the products you are buying do not buy them. Seek advice from your GP or another healthcare professional.

Visit <http://www.gov.uk/fakemeds> for tips on buying medicines safely online and how to avoid unscrupulous sites.

## Notes to Editor

1. [Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency](#) is responsible for regulating all medicines and medical devices in the UK by ensuring they work and are acceptably safe. All our work is underpinned by robust and fact-based judgements to ensure that the benefits justify any risks.

MHRA is a centre of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency which also includes the [National Institute for Biological Standards and Control \(NIBSC\)](#) and the [Clinical Practice Research Datalink \(CPRD\)](#). MHRA is an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care.

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# Press release: Big changes to motorway upgrades set to improve drivers' journeys

Following feedback from road users, the government company is changing the timing of some of its roadworks. It means that work on projects to add extra lanes and better technology to the M56 near Manchester Airport and the M6 between Warrington and Wigan, which had been due to start this spring, will now start after current major motorway upgrades have been completed.

Highways England has also set out plans to improve how smart motorway projects are carried out on the North West's motorways in the future.

They include changes to the layout of roadworks to reduce the need for overnight diversions and finish schemes sooner. Temporary speed limits will also be increased to 60mph when it is safe for drivers and road workers, and three lanes will be maintained in each direction during the day throughout upgrades.

Mike Bull, Highways England's smart motorways programme manager for the North West, said:

Hundreds of thousands of people across the North West will benefit from a huge investment on the road network over the next few years and we're keen to help keep drivers moving while the upgrades take place.

We've listened to what people have been telling us about roadworks and have decided to reschedule two major schemes, benefitting drivers who use our roads to get to work and businesses who deliver goods across the region. We're committed to the upgrades; we are simply changing the timetable for projects on the M56 and M6.

We're also reviewing how we carry out major upgrades so that we can minimise disruption as much as possible and maintain connections for drivers using the road network.

Highways England is committed to carrying out the biggest upgrade of the North West's motorways in a generation and has already completed major schemes on the M62 and M60, as well as opening a new link road between the M56 and M6, since 2015.

The company has also completed almost half of a smart motorway upgrade on the M6 in Cheshire, opening a fourth lane on both carriageways between Holmes Chapel and Knutsford last month.

The temporary speed limit was increased to 60mph before Christmas while testing took place on new technology, and variable speed limits have now been introduced up to 70mph to improve the flow of traffic. The entire 19-mile upgrade between Crewe and Knutsford is on schedule to be finished by the end of March.

Work on a major upgrade of the M62 near Warrington is also due to be completed by spring 2020, increasing capacity by a third. The scheme will benefit commuters who had previously faced average speeds as low as 36mph on their way home from work.

A project to upgrade a four-mile-stretch of the M56 near Manchester Airport will now start by spring 2020 after the M62 scheme has been completed, and work will begin as planned this autumn to upgrade another stretch of the M62 between Rochdale and Brighouse in West Yorkshire.

Other major motorway projects, including a scheme on the M6 between Warrington and Wigan, will be staggered to start between 2020 and 2025.

Contraflow roadworks layouts, where one lane is moved onto the opposite carriageway with a temporary barrier between traffic, will also be introduced where possible to cut the duration of schemes.

The change to the road layout will allow bigger construction areas to be created at the side of motorways so that more work can be carried out in one shift. Traffic will also be able to continue to travel in both directions on the motorway when one carriageway is closed for major construction work overnight, reducing the need for diversions.

Get more details on the [North West smart motorway upgrades](#).