

[News story: New video help for businesses to tackle product safety issues](#)

All businesses must ensure the products they put on the market are safe but if a safety issue is later identified a planned course of action is critical.

The new government-backed video, PAS7100 Supporting better product recalls, explains how the Code of Practice on Consumer Product Safety Related Recalls and other Corrective Actions can help.

See the video here: [PAS7100 Supporting better product recalls](#)

The Code sets out the responsibilities and role of Market Surveillance Authorities, and provides practical guidance to help ensure businesses can act promptly to protect public safety should a consumer product be found to be unsafe.

Part 1 of the Code sets out practical guidance on:

- monitoring product safety and traceability
- product safety incident plans
- managing a recall or corrective action situation

Part 2 of the Code provides guidance on the role of Market Surveillance Authorities in supporting businesses to meet the code requirements. It helps businesses monitor the safety of products and put a product safety incident plan in place, so they are prepared to deal with any product safety incident that arises.

The Code also provides practical guidance for businesses on managing an incident because it is vital businesses act promptly if a potential product safety issue arises. Advance planning makes it far easier to manage any product safety incident that might occur efficiently and effectively.

You can obtain a copy of the Code from the [British Standards Institution \(BSI\)](#), which also hosts the video.

Press release: Brokenshire unveils £500 million affordable homes funding boost

- Government backs pioneering project to build rooftop properties in London on the top of existing buildings.
- Further £497 million for housing associations to build more than 11,000 new affordable homes, including properties for social rent.

Nearly £500 million will be spent building more than 11,000 much-needed affordable properties across the country, Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP has announced today (30 January 2019).

The funding boost, which will help the government towards its target of building 300,000 properties a year by the mid 2020s, was announced at the London First Building Summit this morning.

The strategic partnerships, agreed by Homes England from Essex to Ecclestone, will give the successful housing associations the freedom to spend the money on the developments where it can have the biggest impact.

Alongside this, homes will be built on London rooftops by the summer after Homes England agreed a £9 million funding deal with Apex Airspace Developments.

The properties – which will be built on five sites across the capital – are largely constructed off site before being winched on top of buildings, minimising disruption to residents.

The first of the homes will be completed by the summer – and in total 78 rooftop homes will be built under the three year deal.

Our revised planning rulebook encourages authorities to promote the use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes.

Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

By providing targeted investment in affordable homes, and funding innovative projects to build rooftop properties, we are making our housing market work for everyone.

Our £500 million funding boost for housing associations will help them build thousands of extra affordable homes – including properties for social rent.

These measures are all part of our plans to deliver 300,000 homes a year by the mid-2020s.

Homes England Chairman, Sir Edward Lister said:

I welcome the new strategic partners who share our ambition to build better homes faster.

Our new ways of working with the sector means that housing associations can use their funding flexibly across their development programmes and respond quickly to local housing demand and a changing market.

The infrastructure upgrades being funded by government include:

Rooftop properties:

The government's housing accelerator, Homes England, has struck a 3-year deal with SME developer, Apex.

Apex is a pioneer of 'airspace' development where unused airspace above residential, commercial and public buildings is used as a location for new homes.

The funding will enable the offsite construction of the homes prior to transportation to each of the 5 sites.

These will then be lifted on top of existing buildings with a crane – resulting in minimal disturbance to existing tenants and residents.

The rooftop properties will be built in Tooting, Wanstead, Walthamstow, Putney and Wallington.

The Housing Associations to benefit from the funding – in the third wave of strategic partnerships – are: Bromford, Curo & Swan, Liverpool Mutual Homes & Torus, Longhurst & Nottingham Community Housing Association, Together, Walsall Housing Group, Yorkshire and Your Housing Group.

The previous wave of Strategic Partnerships were announced as part of the [2018 Budget](#)

The purpose of the Partnerships is to give Housing Associations greater flexibility and boost delivery, by ensuring money can be allocated where it is need across multiple projects – rather than a case by case basis.

The rooftop properties will be built across five sites in the capital in Tooting, Wanstead, Walthamstow, Putney and Wallington. Apex expects the first three sites, comprising 32 homes, to be ready by summer 2019. Homes delivered will be priced within the Help to Buy threshold to help support more people into home ownership. The project is being funded from the government's £4.5 billion Home Building Fund.

Homes England is the new housing delivery organisation that has been created to adopt a more commercial approach to respond to the long term housing

challenges facing this country. The new, expanded agency will play a far bigger role in investing in supply and intervening in the market to help deliver 300,000 homes a year by the middle of the next decade. For more information visit [Homes England on Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/homes-england)

Press release: Croydon zombie knife attacker jailed

A man who attacked a car using a large combat knife, terrorising the driver inside, has today been jailed after the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland QC MP, personally argued that his original sentence was too low at the Court of Appeal.

Joshua Gardner, 19, attacked a car with a large 'zombie knife' having spotted the victim, who he had previously argued with, sitting inside. The victim tried to drive away but clipped the wheel of Gardner's bike, causing him to fall. Gardner then began kicking the vehicle, before hitting the windows with his knife. He eventually managed to smash the passenger window, and attempted to stab the victim through the hole. The victim managed to exit the car and get away uninjured.

Gardner was originally sentenced to 2 years in prison, suspended for 2 years, at the Central Criminal Court in November 2018. Today, the Court of Appeal has jailed Gardner for 3 and a half years.

Speaking outside the Court of Appeal, the Solicitor General said:

Gardner took to the streets in broad daylight, terrorising his victim and those members of the public who witnessed this extreme act of violence with a dangerous weapon. I am pleased that the Court of Appeal has today decided that a custodial sentence is more appropriate to help prevent Gardner from posing a threat to anyone else.

News story: £2 million investment to help small businesses to grow

Britain is one of the best places in the world to start and grow a business,

[according to a government review](#). However, a productivity gap exists between the UK and international competitors, which means our businesses are not reaping all the benefits that they could be.

Adopting leading technologies, practices and support services – such as cloud computing, mobile technology and e-purchasing – can improve the productivity and earning power of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and in turn grow the wider economy.

The [Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy](#) (BEIS) and Innovate UK have up to £2 million to prove and test ideas that enable small businesses to become more productive.

The Business Basics Fund

Investment is through the Business Basics Fund, part of the government's [Business Basics Programme](#) to encourage SMEs to implement proven technologies and practices.

Yesterday, UK government announced the projects to be awarded £2 million through the first funding competition.

This includes a project with the retail and hospitality sectors to use AI technologies such as chatbots to improve customer experiences, and another to support greater digitisation in dairy farming.

Small Business Minister, Kelly Tolhurst said:

Small businesses are the backbone of our economy. As part of our modern Industrial Strategy, we are supporting them with new investments to boost their productivity and ensure they can continue to thrive in the future.

Different parts to the competition

There are different competitions to apply into, depending on your organisation and the type of research and development being carried out. These are for:

- proof of concept projects
- trials that are either:
 - led by a business
 - led by another type of organisation that isn't a business

Projects across all opportunities should look at how SMEs can become more productive through one or more of the following:

- adopting tried-and tested technologies, such as accountancy, CRM, HR and payment systems
- adopting modern business practices

- improving the use of technologies and practices already active within the business

Specific considerations might also include:

- addressing information failures and improving awareness of relevant technologies and practices
- building the confidence of SMEs on the application of these technologies and practices
- offering advice services through trusted advisors, supply chains and informal peer-to-peer networks
- exploring how using complementary technologies and practices can affect adoption
- comparing lower cost, scalable interventions with more intensive types of support
- exploring specific characteristics and issues SMEs may face, such as within family-run firms

Proving a concept

Proof of concept awards are for ideas that are in early development.

Projects should encourage SMEs to adopt proven technologies or management practices that can boost their productivity.

Competition information

- the competition is open, and the deadline for applications is at midday on 17 April 2019
- UK-based businesses of any size, public sector, university or research and technology organisations, charities and not-for-profit companies are eligible to lead a project
- organisations could get up to £60,000 each to run a proof of concept project
- projects must start by 1 September 2019 and can last up to 12 months
- there will be webinar briefings on [14 February 2019](#) and [7 March 2019](#) for applicants to find out more about the competition, and an [online evaluation masterclass on 5 March 2019](#) to help assess and analyse the results of a project

Taking an idea to trial

The aim of trial projects is to test different approaches for encouraging SMEs and supporting adoption.

Projects should generate robust evidence about the most effective approaches to improving the productivity of SMEs. They should also build understanding of the short, medium and long-term impacts of such approaches.

Trials should plan to use a control group for testing and, if successful in the application process, register a trial protocol.

Competition information

- the 2 trial competition are open, and the deadline for applications is at midday on 17 April 2019
- in the business-led competition, UK-based businesses of any size are eligible to lead a project, working alone or with others
- in the non-business-led competition, UK-based public sector organisations, universities, research and technology organisations, charities and not-for-profit companies can be the lead, working alone or with others
- organisations could get up to £400,000 to run a trial
- the best projects at the written applications stage will be invited to attend an interview panel on 5 June 2019 to present their ideas
- projects must start by 1 September 2019 and can last up to 12 months
- there will be webinar briefings on [14 February 2019](#) and [7 March 2019](#) for applicants to find out more about the competition, and an [online evaluation masterclass on 5 March 2019](#) to help assess and analyse the results of a project

If you are a business and wish to lead a project, apply in the business-led trial competition.

[Find out more.](#)

If you are not a business but another type of organisation and wish to lead a project, apply in the non-business-led trial competition.

[Find out more.](#)

[Speech: Launch of the Independent Review into the Persecution of Christians across the Globe: Foreign Secretary's Speech](#)

Archbishop, bishop, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, a very warm welcome this morning to this very important occasion and very significant launch.

Last Sunday, many people here will have been going to church, as indeed was the case in the Philippines at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in the Southern Philippines. And in the middle of that service, a bomb exploded and 20 people were killed and the perpetrators then issued a hate-filled

statement labelling the Cathedral as a 'crusader temple'.

And this was a very vivid reminder of the terrible truth that freedom of worship is something that cannot only not be taken for granted, but is a growing concern all over the world.

And what happened in the Philippines has happened in Egypt. We know now from the excellent Open Doors report that a quarter of a billion Christians are suffering some sort of persecution all over the world, and we know that a number of the countries where this happens are countries that we don't necessarily talk about.

Countries like Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan, Libya, North Korea, but also in some of the bigger countries.

We know that there are serious and growing issues in China. And also in countries where we might have hoped there wouldn't be a serious issue, like India, we know that this is becoming a much bigger issue.

And as me and my team at the Foreign Office reflected on this, we wanted to ask ourselves a question as to whether the FCO, which has one of the best global networks of any diplomatic service – we basically after the Americans and the Chinese have the third biggest diplomatic network of any country alongside the French – and we wanted to ask ourselves a question as to whether we really are doing as much as we possibly could.

And we wanted to do this not just because freedom of worship is a fundamental human right, but because also freedom of worship is the invisible line between open societies and closed societies.

Where freedom of worship is hampered or prevented, then usually that's a sign of lots of other things going wrong, and we wanted to make sure that the UK is doing everything to champion the values that we all believe in.

I am a Johnny-come-lately to this, because we have in the Foreign Office a fantastic minister, Lord Ahmad, who has been championing religious freedom since before I became Foreign Secretary, and himself comes from a Muslim minority faith – the Ahmadiyya community that have effectively been banished from Pakistan because it's not safe for them to be in Pakistan, and have had to move away. And many of them are based in the UK, but actually all over the world, so this is someone who knows from his own life the dangers.

But very much on his advice, we particularly want to look at the issue of Christian persecution.

Because the evidence is that 80 per cent of all the people who are suffering religious persecution are Christian.

And we want to, if I can put it this way, banish any hesitation to look into this issue without fear or favour that may exist because of our imperial history, because of the concerns that some people might have in linking the activities of missionaries in the nineteenth century to misguided imperialism. And all those concerns may have led to a hesitation to really

look at this issue properly, and we don't want that to happen.

And in order to keep us on the straight and narrow I've asked the Bishop of Truro, Bishop Philip Mounstephen, to do an independent review, and to work with all of you, to work with the FCO, and to tell us how we should approach this and what more we can do.

And what I want to do is, what I'm hoping the outcome of this will be is, first of all in practical terms, I want to make absolutely sure when I am meeting a foreign minister, a prime minister or a president in another country, and there's an issue concerning religious freedom, and in particular the rights of Christians, I want to make sure that it is absolutely on my list of things that I need to raise.

Sometimes you do these things publically, sometimes you do them privately, but we should always be doing them if they need to be done and I want to make sure that happens and I don't think it does at the moment.

But secondly, I want to see what we can do to build an international coalition of countries that are concerned about this so that we can play, I think the role that Britain has played for many years, which is whilst recognising that we're not a superpower, at the same time, not underestimating the power and influence that we have as a very well-connected country to bring together other countries that share our values and give a voice to people who don't have a voice.

And I think the final point I want to make which everyone in this room will be well aware of, but I'm not sure necessarily that the public outside are: we are a wealthy country and we sometimes think that when it comes to the rights of Christians this is really about wealthy people.

It isn't.

The people who are suffering are some of the poorest people on the planet and they happen to have the faith that I have, that many people here have, and they happen to be suffering very badly for it.

There is sometimes good news.

I think the news about Asia Bibi this week is extremely encouraging, but the truth is that unless we make a real effort and unless the world knows that we are making a real effort, those bits of good news will become the exception and not the rule. And that's what we don't want to allow to happen.

So thank you very much for your support.

I'm sure, I say this in advance as a bit of expectation-setting, I'm sure we won't be able to do absolutely everything you want, Philip, but we are very, very serious about doing what we can and we're incredibly grateful for the support of many people here and many people outside as we in the Foreign Office go on a journey and think really hard about what we could do better.

Thank you very much.