

# Press release: Crackdown on rogue bailiffs

- Ministers announce that they will be launching a call for evidence after concerns are raised that some bailiffs are aggressively pursuing debts
- Review of government reforms highlights the positive impact of changes but reveals lingering concerns over aggressive behaviour by minority of bailiffs.

The Government is to launch a call for evidence following concerns that a minority of bailiffs are still acting aggressively when collecting money from debtors – particularly from vulnerable people.

The call for evidence, which will be launched shortly, will look to those directly involved to share their experiences to help stop this in its tracks.

Justice Minister Lucy Frazer said:

The majority of bailiffs act professionally and within the rules, but we have been told by those working on the front line that this may not always be the case.

Aggressive tactics will not be tolerated, and through our call for evidence we will identify where the problems are and, if necessary, take action to ensure all bailiffs operate professionally and with proper respect and sensitivity.

In 2014, the government brought in new laws to protect the public from aggressive enforcement agents, while at the same time making sure that debts could still be collected fairly.

The first review of those reforms is published today (2 April), demonstrating positive progress since our changes. This includes better awareness around debtor rights and how to complain, more clarity for debtors about the fees that can be charged, the processes that should be followed, and where to go for advice.

It also found the overall effectiveness of proper enforcement has improved, with a greater proportion of debts now being successfully enforced.

Read [One year review of enforcement agent reforms](#).

However, following concerns raised by the advice sector, the call for evidence which will be launched shortly seeks to address those minority of bailiffs who continue to flout the rules and aggressively pressure vulnerable

people.

## **Notes to editors**

Debts which enforcement agents (formerly known as bailiffs) enforce include council tax arrears and unpaid debts owed to individuals and businesses.

In 2014 the Government introduced reforms to strengthen protection from rogue enforcement agents, while at the same time making sure that debts could still be collected fairly.

The reforms centred on the implementation of Part 3 and Schedule 12 of the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007. The reforms provided legal protection by introducing a comprehensive code governing, amongst other things:

- when and how enforcement agents can enter somebody's premises
- the safeguards to prevent the use of force against debtors
- what goods they can and cannot seize and, if necessary, sell
- what fees they can charge

The reforms also stopped enforcement agents entering homes when only children are present, and introduced mandatory training and a new certification process for enforcement agents.

Ministers pledged to review the impact of the reforms, and the first review is published today.

The review started in early 2015 and involved analysing a variety of data, and gathering views from key stakeholders including creditors, the advice sector, other government agencies and enforcement agents themselves.

For further information please call the Press Office 0203 334 3536.

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## **[News story: FCO Minister Burt appalled by deaths on Israel/Gaza border](#)**

I am appalled by the deaths and injuries on the Israel/Gaza border on Friday (30 March). There is an urgent need to establish the facts, including why

such a volume of live fire was used and what role Hamas played in the violence. But the most important thing is to ensure that there is no repeat of what happened, with all sides committing to peaceful protest, restraint and international law.

This issue cannot just be managed over time. We need a political process to deliver a two-state solution; urgent action to improve the economic and humanitarian situation in Gaza, including easing of restrictions by Israel and Egypt; and Palestinian reconciliation based on full adherence to the Quartet principles by Hamas.

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## [News story: Scheme opens to help combat VAT evasion by non-EU online traders](#)

The central part of a package of measures to combat the abuse of VAT rules by online traders based outside the European Union (EU), The Fulfilment House Due Diligence Scheme (FHDDS), opens for registration today (1 April 2018).

Fulfilment houses that are part of this scheme will be required to perform proper due diligence on the goods they fulfil and their overseas clients.

If you run a business in the UK, such as a warehouse, that stores goods imported from outside the EU that are owned by, or on behalf of, someone established outside the EU, you will need to apply to register for the scheme.

The deadline for applications from existing fulfilment businesses is 30 June 2018, and businesses that start trading on or after today to 30 June 2018 will need to apply on or before 30 September 2018. There are penalties for late applications.

Businesses that meet the FHDDS criteria will not be allowed to trade as a fulfilment business from 1 April 2019 unless they are approved by HMRC, and risk a £10,000 penalty and a criminal conviction if they do so.

The FHDDS will help HMRC identify and combat non-compliant overseas suppliers more easily and make it more difficult for them to trade in the UK.

This will make the market fairer for the many legitimate and compliant businesses trading in the UK that pay the VAT and customs duty that they owe.

The scheme was announced by the government at Budget 2016 as part of a package of measures that will disrupt and deter abuse by some overseas businesses selling goods to UK customers through online marketplaces – HMRC

estimated that this was costing the Exchequer £1 billion to £1.5 billion of unpaid VAT a year.

Businesses that only store or fulfil goods that they own, or only store or fulfil goods that are not imported from outside the EU, are not required to register.

Transport businesses that need to store goods temporarily as part of their service, such as during an overnight break, are also not required to register.

Approved fulfilment businesses must complete due diligence checks on their overseas customers and maintain records about the goods they store from 1 April 2019.

Last month, [other measures took effect](#) that are helping to combat VAT fraud committed by online sellers.

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## [News story: Foreign Secretary's Easter message 2018](#)

I would like to send my warmest wishes to all those celebrating Easter. For Christians across the country and the globe, it is a time to gather with family and friends to reflect on the values of compassion and kindness.

Easter is also a good opportunity to recognise the fantastic contributions that Churches and faith groups make in our communities every day.

During this Easter period we also remember those who are denied their celebrations due to religious persecution and discrimination, particularly Christians in the Middle East. Such instances of religious intolerance are unacceptable and the UK continues to work hard for freedom of religion or belief for all.

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## [Press release: Prime Minister's Easter message 2018](#)

[Watch the Prime Minister's 2018 Easter message](#)

Easter is the most important time in the Christian calendar.

A time when we remember Christ's sacrifice on the cross, and give thanks for the promise of redemption afforded by his resurrection.

Over the last year, Britain has faced some dark moments, from the terrorist attacks at Westminster Bridge and London Bridge, at Manchester Arena and Finsbury Park, and the fire at Grenfell Tower.

I know from speaking to the victims and survivors of these terrible events how vital the love and support they have received from their friends, family and neighbours has been to them as they begin to rebuild their lives. In the bravery of those facing adversity, the dedication of our emergency services, and the generosity of local communities, we see the triumph of the human spirit.

The Easter story contains an inspiring promise of new life and the triumph of hope.

For Christians around the world facing persecution, the message of the Cross and the resurrection help them to stand firm in their faith.

Here in Britain, Easter arrives with the coming of spring – a time of rebirth and renewal.

It is a chance for families to come together, to share a meal, to be outdoors and to enjoy the first stirring of nature after winter.

However you are spending this Easter, I hope that you have a happy and peaceful time.