

Press release: Prime Minister launches new planning rules to get England delivering homes for everyone

Maximising the use of land, strengthened protections for the Green Belt and a greater emphasis on converting planning permissions into homes are at the heart of new planning reforms, launched by the Prime Minister today (5 March 2018) to deliver the homes the country needs.

The government has already delivered more than a million homes since 2010, and last year saw the biggest increase in housing supply in England – over 217,000 new homes – for almost a decade.

Although significant progress has been made, we must do more to deliver 300,000 homes a year by the mid-2020s. More planning permissions need to be fast tracked into homes for a generation of first time buyers locked out of the housing market and our increasing older generation need the right homes designed to their needs.

A [major overhaul to the National Planning Policy Framework](#), the first in 6 years, has been launched today providing a comprehensive approach for planners, developers and councils to build more homes, more quickly, in the places people want to live. Councils and developers will now be required to work with community groups to ensure those affected by new developments will have a say on how they look and feel. It will focus on the following areas:

Greater responsibility

Local authorities will have a new housing delivery test focused on driving up the numbers of homes actually delivered in their area, rather than numbers planned for. Developers will also be held to account for delivering the commitments, including affordable housing and the infrastructure needed to support communities.

Maximising the use of land

More freedom will be given to local authorities to make the most of existing brownfield land to build homes that maximise density. Redundant land will be encouraged such as under utilised retail or industrial space for homes, with more flexibilities given to extend upwards on existing blocks of flats and houses as well as shops and offices. This will mean we can build the homes the country needs while maintaining strong protection for the Green Belt.

Maintaining strong protections for the environment

Ensuring developments result in a net gain to the environment where possible and increases the protection given to ancient woodland so they are not lost for future generations.

Ensuring the right homes are built

Delivering more affordable homes that meet the housing needs of everyone wherever they are in their life, including sites dedicated for first time buyers, build to rent homes with family friendly tenancies, guaranteed affordable homes for key workers and adapted homes for older people.

Higher quality and design

Introducing new quality standards so well designed new homes are built in places people are proud to live in and live next door to.

More transparent planning process

Local authorities will be encouraged to work together and continue to close the gap between planning permissions granted and homes built. A new standardised approach to assessing housing need will be introduced with new measures to make the system of developer contributions clearer, simpler and more robust, so developers understand what's expected of them and will be in no doubt that councils will hold them to their commitments.

Housing Secretary, Sajid Javid, said:

An entire generation is being locked out of a broken housing market as prices and rents race ahead of supply. Reforming the planning system is the crucial next step to building the homes the country needs.

This government is determined to fix the broken housing market and restore the dream of home ownership for a new generation. There is no silver bullet to this problem but we're re-writing the rules on planning so we can take action on all fronts.

In moving to a more integrated society, the focus for everyone, whether a developer or a neighbourhood group, must be to come together to build the homes our communities deserve.

John Acres, MRTPI, President, The Royal Town Planning Institute, said:

We are delighted to be co-launching the consultation on the new National Planning Policy Framework today and we encourage the planning profession and others who care about planning and what it can do, to feed back to government.

The RTPI will be holding a series of round table sessions for our members around the country to discuss its contents.

Planners are critical to and passionate about building vibrant and connected neighbourhoods, towns, cities and wider areas; at the heart of which we need to ensure we build enough good quality homes

that fit the needs of all.

A clear, concise and consistent policy context can help to deliver this. We applaud the government's focus on homes and planning and in revising the framework.

In a move to ensure that swift and fair planning decisions are made at appeal an end to end review of planning inquiries is also planned.

The planning reform package is part of a wider package of housing reforms; building on the recent £5 billion [Housing Infrastructure Fund](#) announced to help unlock new homes in areas with the greatest housing need.

The government has already allocated £866 million to 133 council led projects to fund key local infrastructure including new roads, cycle paths, flood defences and land remediation work, all essential ahead of building the homes.

The [consultation](#) has launched today to give everyone the opportunity to feed in views on proposals for the future of planning and will run until Thursday 10 May.

Two consultations will run from today to seek views on [reforming developer contributions to affordable housing and infrastructure](#) and [text of the National Planning Policy Framework](#).

[Speech: Penny Mordaunt's speech at Safeguarding Summit](#)

Thank you for being here on this important day.

Today we will start the vital change this sector needs.

Your task is to start laying the foundations to rebuild the credibility of the aid sector on this issue, both here and overseas.

Today, I want you to come up with the ideas and initiatives we can take forward the practical tools, processes and protocols to ensure we protect the people we are here to serve.

Unless, we do all we can to prevent wrongdoing, and unless we can hold all those who do wrong to account, we will have failed in our duty to protect the most vulnerable.

As you know, I wrote to every UK charity, which receives UK aid directly, asking that they provide me with a statement of assurance on four key areas:

Their safeguarding environment and policies, their organisational culture, their clarity and transparency, and their handling of allegations and incidents.

I also asked them to confirm that they have referred any and all concerns on specific cases and individuals to the relevant authorities, including prosecuting authorities.

All 179 organisations have given me their statement of assurance, and many gave additional details on reporting and allegations.

We are following up with 37 organisations to gain further clarity on their assurance, or reporting, and will issue a summary of all our analysis when this work is complete

But this exercise is not just about receiving assurances.

It marks the starting point from which we must now build.

Across the returns, we saw important examples of good practice, but overall, there was too little evidence in the areas of robust risk management, comprehensive reporting, responsibility being taken at the highest level for safeguarding, and of beneficiaries always being put first.

So if we are to meet our duty, then the sector must raise standards.

I am determined that DFID will play its full part in this.

So, from today, DFID will put in place new, enhanced and specific safeguarding standards for the organisations we work with.

These standards will include an assessment of codes of conduct, how organisations identify and respond to incidents, and how their risk management places safeguarding and beneficiaries at the very core.

That assessment will set the bar at a level of the very best – a bar that we will continue to push higher – from our work here today and in the time to come.

Our standards will be world-leading. They will be tough and exacting. Organisations should not bid for new funding unless they are prepared to meet these tough new standards.

We will not approve funds to them unless they pass our new standards.

We will also start to apply these new standards to organisations we have ongoing work with.

And will ensure that all those standards can apply to all our partners, big and small.

DFID is holding itself to these high standards we expect of others and today, I can also confirm that DFID's internal review into historic allegations

involving DFID staff has concluded.

Our Permanent Secretary Matthew Rycroft will say more on this later, but I think it was vital that we went back through every record we have, since they began, to check action has been taken. And if any new information comes to light through our continued efforts we will ensure appropriate action is taken on this.

The sector must do the same, and pay particular attention to the issue of reviewing and reporting historic cases. We expect all who wish to work with us, and indeed any organisation that works on development, to take this issue as an urgent priority.

Why?

Because only by reporting can we identify and bring to justice predatory individuals.

And it is those predatory individuals who concern me most.

My message to those who have sought to exploit this sector and the human tragedy in which it operates, is this – we will all share information we have with law enforcement.

We will find you.

We will bring you to justice.

Your time is up.

This summit is a critical moment to learn lessons and drive up standards across the entire aid sector.

Now is the time for action and for the British aid sector to take a lead. To set standards, a template and an example, for the rest of the world to follow.

To keep people safe we need to find a way staff can be properly vetted and monitored as they move between organisations and countries.

We need to find a way to hear the voices of the people we serve, so we can respond when they tell us they are being mistreated.

Would the Oxfam case, or the abuse of women in Syria, have persisted if those victims' voices were listened to?

And we must have thorough assurance and auditing of the sector.

We must share our ideas and learn how to keep on improving our safeguarding measures. We need continuous training and professional development.

And we must ensure smaller organisations – who are such an asset to the sector- are supported and able to meet these standards too.

These are the outcomes I want to see. Now begins your task of finding the solutions.

Your plans will be put into action.

Our partners will sign up to them.

Other nations will follow our lead.

Let us ensure that the world's poorest and most vulnerable people are always our first priority.

Let us ensure that there is no hiding place for those who wish to exploit the vulnerable in our sector.

Let us ensure that the British public can take pride in everything that is done in their name, in the lives you save, in the hope you bring, and in the immense good you do in this sector.

Let us put this right.

Thank you.

News story: A new apprenticeship programme kicks off National Apprenticeship Week 2018

Held at BBC Broadcasting House with social mobility charity, the Sutton Trust, the launch event was hosted by BBC Home Affairs Editor Mark Easton and Claire Paul, the BBC's Director of Leadership Development and New Talent. Secretary of State for Education Damian Hinds MP, BBC Director General Tony Hall and Sue Husband, Director of the National Apprenticeship Service were all in attendance.

The 'Apprenticeships Work' themed [National Apprenticeship Week](#) is the 11th annual week-long celebration of apprenticeships and during the week employers and apprentices from across England will come together to showcase the success of apprenticeships whilst encouraging even more people to choose apprenticeships as a pathway to a great career.

Secretary of State for Education Damian Hinds MP said:

I welcome the ambitions of BBC Academy and the Sutton Trust to increase the number of disadvantaged young people taking up apprenticeships.

Apprenticeships play a crucial role in helping people realise their potential as they learn and earn, and are providing employers with the skilled workforce our country needs.

This National Apprenticeship Week we want to show that apprenticeships offer a great route into skilled employment for people of all ages and backgrounds, so that everyone can access the excellent career opportunities apprenticeships offer.

The new apprenticeship programme announced today by the BBC will be based in London and Salford and has been designed to support 50 school leavers from socially diverse backgrounds, to apply for apprenticeships, developed with advice from the Sutton Trust. The programme will run from September 2018 to March 2020 and will prepare students for applications to apprenticeships in the BBC and wider creative sector – including the BBC Production, Digital Journalism and Broadcast Operations schemes which start in September 2020.

Claire Paul, the BBC's Director of Leadership and New Talent said:

This new scheme aims to give a leg up to young people who have the raw talent to succeed but perhaps don't have the confidence to apply for highly competitive apprenticeships. We'll be offering them training in a wide range of employability skills such as interview techniques and coaching to give them an equal shot at success.

Sir Peter Lampl, Founder and Chairman of the Sutton Trust added:

The government's target for apprenticeships by 2020 is 3 million. We know that young people from low and moderate income backgrounds are much less likely than their peers to take up the most prestigious apprenticeships.

To make sure apprenticeships fulfil their potential as a vehicle for social mobility, it will be crucial to improve access to those that offer real alternatives to A-levels and degrees. The BBC's new programme will play an important part by enabling more young people from low-income homes to access high-quality apprenticeships in the media.

Sue Husband, Director of the National Apprenticeship Service concluded:

Having the 11th National Apprenticeship Week launch with the news of this commitment from the BBC is great for the sector, for employers, for local communities and for individuals who are looking to progress in their career through an apprenticeship.

We want to see workforces represent the community they serve and it's great to see committed employers like the BBC develop strategies and programmes to extend the reach of their apprenticeship programme to socially diverse backgrounds.

I am looking forward to hearing more this week about what other employers have planned to ensure they open up their apprenticeship programmes to individuals who may not typically have considered them applicable and achievable themselves.

Jason Holt CBE and Chief Executive of HoltsGroup was announced as Chair of the Apprenticeship Ambassador Network at today's launch event.

The [Apprenticeship Ambassador Network](#) aims to grow the apprenticeship programme by engaging with new employers whilst promoting all aspects of apprenticeships – including traineeships, higher level apprenticeships and introducing new sectors to apprenticeships.

A second BBC programme, also announced today, will be based in Cardiff, Wales and will offer 10 full time, paid, pre-employment traineeships to high potential raw talent with the ambition to apply for 10 BBC Wales Journalism Apprenticeships. The programme will be supported by further opportunities for young people to attend BBC 'Boot Camp' training sessions and access to work experience placements.

You can find images from the event on the [National Apprenticeships Service Flickr](#) page.

[News story: Pay for Easter childcare with Tax-Free Childcare](#)

HMRC is reminding working parents that they can use Tax-Free Childcare to pay for regulated holiday clubs during the Easter holidays.

More than 55,000 registered childcare providers including school, football, art and tennis clubs have signed up.

Parents, including the self-employed, can apply online for Tax-Free Childcare – part of the government's Childcare Choices offer – for children who are under 12.

Tax-Free Childcare will cut childcare costs for working families by up to £2,000 per child per year, or £4,000 for disabled children. For every £8 parents pay into their childcare account the government will add an extra £2, up to £2,000 per child per year.

The money can go towards a wide range of regulated childcare, including nurseries, childminders, after-school clubs or holiday clubs.

This website includes a [Childcare Calculator](#) that compares all the government's childcare offers to check what works best for individual families.

Once eligible parents have opened their new account they can start paying their childcare provider straightaway, using the government contribution.

Sinead, a mum of one from West Sussex, said:

I use 30 hours in term time, and then Tax-Free Childcare for after-school and holiday clubs. The school holidays are always tricky, but when I applied for Tax-Free Childcare I was really surprised by how much support I could get. It's a really great help, and the application was really straightforward.

Looking back, I wonder how we managed before – it's really taken a weight off my shoulders.

Liz Truss, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, said:

School holidays like Easter are great fun for kids, but working parents can need help with childcare.

Tax-Free Childcare can be used to cut the stress and bills for parents, and there are lots of brilliant holiday clubs and childcare providers to help parents over the Easter holiday.

Our message to eligible families across the UK is sign up now and save on your childcare costs.

Tax-Free Childcare builds on other childcare support already available including:

- Childcare support through tax credits, or Universal Credit
- 15 and 30 hours free childcare in England.

[Press release: Mordaunt leads aid sector action on sexual exploitation](#)

at landmark summit

The Department for International Development and the Charity Commission will co-host a safeguarding summit today (Monday 5 March) to bring together UK international development charities, regulatory bodies and independent experts to commit to drive up safeguarding standards and take bold steps to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse within charities and by staff abroad.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt has tasked the delegates to come up with a series of actions to address the shortcomings in the aid sector. Some of the ideas to be discussed at the summit include:

- Introducing new standards for vetting and referencing across the sector.
- Ensuring whistle-blowers and survivors of exploitation and abuse get the counselling and support they need.
- Creating an independent body to promote external scrutiny and ensure the highest possible standards across the aid sector.
- Changing organisational culture to tackle power imbalances, encourage reporting, take allegations seriously and hold people to account.

NGOs and charities in attendance will sign a joint statement setting out the key principles they will adhere to, and agree on a set of practical actions to take forward. This summit will speed up the process of improving standards and restoring full trust following the allegations that have come to light since early February.

Speaking ahead of the event, International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

Now is the time for action. The aid sector needs to ensure it is meeting its duty of care to the world's most vulnerable people. It needs to be honest about past mistakes. It must do all it can to win back the trust of the British public.

This summit is a crucial moment to learn lessons from the past and drive up standards across the sector.

Today, we begin taking the practical steps to ensure the safety of the people we help is always our first priority and that the

British aid sector sets the standard for the rest of the world to follow.

In a strong statement to Parliament following the Oxfam scandal, Ms Mordaunt set out how the public must be able to trust organisations, not only to do all they can to prevent harm, but to report and follow up incidents of wrongdoing when they occur.

Baroness Stowell, Chair of the Charity Commission added:

The recent accounts of sexual exploitation and abuse in the aid sector are deeply distressing. Not only have some aid workers abused the people they were sent to support, but by not exposing and responding to these serious failings properly at the time, charities have betrayed the public's trust in what the word charity actually means.

I am encouraged to see leaders of international aid agencies coming together at today's summit with a firm commitment to bringing about cultural change in charities and making the protection of people their top priority. The Charity Commission will work constructively with charities to identify practical changes and help make them work.

But however noble the cause, it will never justify means which fall below basic standards of conduct expected of any organisation. And if we are to restore public trust and the nation's pride in what charities achieve, we have to show that's what we understand.

The points raised at the summit will be taken to a wide-ranging global safeguarding conference later in the year to drive action across the whole international aid sector.

This summit will build upon the action already taken by DFID in response to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in the aid sector, including:

- Establishing a new Safeguarding Unit in DFID to urgently review safeguarding across all parts of the aid sector and catalyse further action to ensure everything is being done to protect people from harm, including sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Appointing Sheila Drew Smith, a recent member of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, to bring her expertise to support DFID's ambition on safeguarding. She will report to the Secretary of State directly and will Chair the Safeguarding Summit.
- Writing to every UK charity that receives UK aid insisting that they set out the steps they are taking to ensure their safeguarding policies are

fully in place and confirm they have referred all concerns they have about specific cases and individuals to the relevant authorities, including prosecuting authorities. A similar request has been sent to non-UK charities and other DFID suppliers, including those in the private sector.

- Agreeing with Oxfam that they will withdraw from bidding for any new UK Government funding until DFID is satisfied that they can meet the high standards we expect of our partners.
- Continuing to work with UN Secretary-General António Guterres to stop abuses under the UN flag and we have introduced specific clauses in our funding agreements with a number of UN agencies to take every action possible to prevent all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse and take robust and prompt action in response to any allegations.
- Reviewing any allegations of sexual misconduct involving DFID staff, which will conclude shortly.

Notes to editors

- On 12 February, the International Development Secretary announced a series of actions to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse in the aid sector. The fourth of the five actions was “to co-host a safeguarding summit with the Charity Commission to agree a set of actions to strengthen safeguarding processes and mechanisms, including around staffing and recruitment.”
- In a statement to Parliament on 20 February, International Development Secretary committed DFID to a review of reported allegations of sexual misconduct involving DFID staff and delivery partners. That is due to report back by Tuesday 6 March.
- The International Development Secretary has written to every UK charity working overseas that receives UK aid—192 letters to 179 organisations—insisting that they spell out the steps they are taking to ensure that their safeguarding policies are fully in place, and that they confirm that they have referred all concerns they have about specific cases and individuals to the relevant authorities, including prosecuting authorities.
- The Charity Commission opened a statutory inquiry into Oxfam on 12 February after it examined documents sent by Oxfam regarding allegations of misconduct by staff involved in its humanitarian response in Haiti. The Commission has concerns that Oxfam may not have fully and frankly disclosed material details about the allegations at the time in 2011, its handling of the incidents since, and the impact that these have both had on public trust and confidence. Details on the scope of the inquiry is available [here](#)
- The Charity Commission has [announced a suite of measures](#) to help ensure charities learn the wider lessons from recent safeguarding revelations involving Oxfam and other charities, and to strengthen public trust and confidence in charities. This includes a new Charity Commission taskforce to handle the recent increase in safeguarding incident reports.