

Press release: Lebanon's Army Day message

On the occasion of Lebanon's Army Day, Charge D'Affaires Benjamin Wastnage at the British embassy said:

The UK has been a steadfast supporter of the Lebanese Army for many years now, as a key component of a strong, sovereign state. The Lebanese Army can be proud that it is now a strong, professional army capable of controlling Lebanon's borders and protecting Lebanon from the threats it faces. The UK stands ready to continue supporting the Lebanese Army in the framework of UNSCRs 1701 and 1559 and the Lebanese Government's backing for the army as the sole defender of Lebanon.

Press release: Manchester hospitals merger cleared by CMA

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has been looking at the impact on healthcare of the proposed merger between Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (CMFT) and University Hospital of South Manchester NHS Foundation Trust (UHSM).

In its final report today, the group of independent CMA panel members found that the merger will give rise to substantial benefits for the care of patients. These outweigh any harm caused by a loss of competition between the merging trusts.

The benefits include reductions in patient mortality, clinical complications and infection rates.

Patients who are expected to benefit from the merger include those at risk of heart attacks or strokes, and those who need vascular surgery or kidney stone removal.

Together, the 2 hospital trusts involved operate 9 hospitals in Manchester. UHSM operates Wythenshawe Hospital and Withington Community Hospital, and CMFT operates Manchester Royal Infirmary, Manchester Royal Eye Hospital, Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, Altrincham Hospital, Saint Mary's Hospital, The University Dental Hospital and Trafford General Hospital.

In considering the merger, the CMA received advice from NHS Improvement and consulted with local commissioners, local authorities and the devolved health and social care body in Manchester and NHS England, all of whom expressed strong support for it.

John Wotton, Chair of the Manchester hospitals merger inquiry group, said:

We have found that this merger will have substantial benefits for the healthcare of patients.

Our confidence in this is strengthened by widespread support from commissioners, clinicians and local authorities in Greater Manchester, who have developed a clear shared vision for providing health and social care under devolved powers.

The hospitals involved presented clear evidence and a well-reasoned case as to how the merger would be beneficial to patients and we received NHS Improvement's advice on this – which helped us to reach our decision to clear the merger.

Competition currently plays a limited role in the NHS, as health commissioners and regulators have instead emphasised co-operative working to handle growing demand for NHS services.

A summary of the final report has been published on the [case page](#), where all other information relating to this investigation is available. The full final report will be published shortly.

Notes for editors

1. The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It is an independent non-ministerial government department with responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and consumer law. For more information see the [CMA's homepage](#) on GOV.UK.
2. On 25 February 2015, the 37 NHS organisations and local authorities in Greater Manchester signed an agreement with the government to devolve health and social care expenditure in Greater Manchester. This followed the agreement between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and leaders of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) devolving new powers and responsibilities to Greater Manchester on 3 November 2014. As a result, the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership assumed control over the region's health and social care budget, which amounts to approximately £6 billion per year.
3. The CMA began its investigation and set out the issues it would be investigating – the investigation examined the effect of the merger on

local patients having reduced choice between different hospital trusts for elective (ie non-emergency) procedures and operations across a number of clinical specialties and maternity services. It also looked at whether the merger will lead to reduced choice in A&E services, specialised services and community services. In its investigation the CMA took into consideration relevant developments in the Greater Manchester area – such as the devolution of health and social care and the proposal for a single hospital provider.

4. The test the group of CMA panel members applied was whether the proposed merger may be expected to result in a 'substantial lessening of competition' in relation to the services the hospitals provide. The group found that there would be a substantial lessening of competition in relation to certain elective and specialist services. The group then considered whether any remedy was appropriate, having regard to any 'relevant customer benefits' expected to arise from the merger.
5. All the CMA's functions in phase 2 merger inquiries are performed by inquiry groups chosen from the CMA's panel members. The appointed inquiry group are the decision-makers on phase 2 inquiries.
6. The CMA's panel members come from a variety of backgrounds, including economics, law, accountancy and/or business; the membership of an inquiry group usually reflects a mix of expertise and experience.
7. The members of this inquiry group are [John Wotton](#) (Inquiry Chair), [Malcolm Nicholson](#), [Robin Aaronson](#) and [Roger Witcomb](#).
8. For CMA updates, follow us on [Facebook](#), Twitter [@CMAgovuk](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#).
9. Enquiries should be directed to press@cma.gsi.gov.uk or 020 3738 6633.

[Press release: Holocaust survivors warn society against forgetting against lessons of history](#)

[Holocaust Memorial Design Film](#)

Britain's Holocaust survivors are urging Britain to remember the lessons of history and understand what they mean for society now.

Survivors warned about the dangers of letting prejudice go unchecked in society as designs for the new Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre go [on display at the V&A](#) (from 1 to 22 August). The Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre will stand against all forms of hatred and extremism in the modern world, including the discrimination that underpins Antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism and homophobia today. British Holocaust survivors are also meeting and speaking directly to visitors to the Museum about their experiences as part of a 'living library' event.

The designs on display at the V&A are being exhibited by the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation, a cross-party project, funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government. Inspired by the UK's last living Holocaust survivors, the project is currently undertaking an international design competition to create a new National Memorial and Learning Centre in London. The project will create a national space for remembrance and an educational experience that will challenge visitors to stand up against hatred and prejudice.

Visitors attending the display in the V&A's Raphael Gallery will be able to see the designs from ten shortlisted teams for the new Memorial and Learning Centre and give their feedback. The experience of British Holocaust survivors will be shared with the public in a variety of ways, including through events and short film excerpts from a new collection of more than 100 British Holocaust survivor testimonies which will have a permanent home in the Learning Centre.

Peter Lantos was in Bergen-Belsen concentration camp as a young boy and is one of the survivors who recorded his testimony as part of the project. He said:

Throughout my life I have seen the best and worst of human nature. It would be a comfort to think that we have learned everything from the past – but it would be naïve. Sadly the need to challenge hatred is constant. I hope that the new centre helps us to do that.

Joan Salter, was separated from her family and not reunited with them until 1947 when she discovered her parents had managed to survive the war and were living in the UK:

We live in dangerous times and tragically, a reminder of how fragile civilisation is, is more crucial now than ever. This is why the new Memorial and Learning Centre are essential.

Sir Peter Bazalgette, Chair of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation, said:

The stories of Holocaust survivors are incredibly powerful. They witnessed a breakdown in society, in its ethics and in our duties to one another. We can and must learn from their experiences to help us fight hatred in society today. These personal stories will have a permanent home in the new Learning Centre. I hope that as many people as possible can help us design it by giving their feedback.

Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, said:

This new Memorial will stand as the everlasting reminder of what can happen if hatred is left unchecked and the foundations of a civilised, democratic society are undermined. We cannot forget the lessons of the past or the people who lived through it. I'd encourage everyone to visit the exhibition or go online to have their say on how Britain can best remember.

The new UK Holocaust Memorial, to be built next to the Houses of Parliament in Westminster, will honour the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust and all the other victims of Nazi persecution. The Learning Centre will provide a world-leading educational experience that explains the facts of the Holocaust and challenges visitors to think about their role in standing up to prejudice in society today.

Ninety-two international design and architecture teams, including top global names, competed to design the project. The competition is now entering its final stages, with designs from the ten shortlisted teams displayed for the public to feedback on as part of their visit.

Rt Hon Ed Balls, UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation Board Member said:

Our new Learning Centre will have the stories of those who survived at its heart and will challenge us all to think about what it means to be an empathetic and engaged citizen in society today. Everyone can look at the designs and have their say on how Britain can best honour the past and learn for the future.

Rt Hon Alex Salmond, UK Holocaust Foundation Memorial Board Member said:

As part of its wider educational work, this project will stretch across these islands for people to understand not just the appalling statistics, not just the magnitude of the criminality, but also the personal endurance of human beings. I'd urge people up and down the country to go online and give their feedback on the ten shortlisted designs.

Karen Pollock MBE, Chief Executive of the Holocaust Educational Trust, said:

The new National Memorial and Learning Centre will stand for generations to come as a symbol of this country's commitment to remembering the Holocaust. In a fragile world, it is more important than ever that we educate the next generation about the dangers of hatred and prejudice – that is what we do at the Holocaust Educational Trust every day and the Memorial and Learning centre will play a vital role in ensuring this message reaches far and wide.

The work to build a new Memorial and Learning Centre began after an independent Commission found widespread dissatisfaction with the current memorial in Hyde Park and worrying gaps in young people's knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust, despite some clear examples of excellent education in some parts of the country.

The designs are displayed in the Raphael Gallery at the V&A from 1 to 22 August 2017. Entrance is free and the Museum is open 10.00 – 17.45 daily (10.00 – 22.00 on Fridays). People across the country can have their say on the designs online at: <https://www.gov.uk/holocaustmemorial/feedback>

About the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation

The UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation was created to implement the recommendations of the Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission report – Britain's Promise to Remember – in 2015, including the delivery of the new Memorial and Learning Centre and the recording of British Holocaust testimony.

The Foundation is an advisory board to the Department for Communities and Local Government. It has cross-party political support and is chaired by Sir Peter Bazalgette.

About the design competition

The international design competition sought to harness the very best architectural talent to create an emotionally powerful and sensitively designed memorial. 92 design teams expressed an interest in the project, with a shortlist of ten invited to submit concept designs, which are on display as part of this exhibition. The ten shortlisted teams are:

- Adjaye Associates
- Allied Works
- Anish Kapoor and Zaha Hadid Architects
- Caruso St John Architects
- Diamond Schmitt Architects
- Foster + Partners
- Heneghan Peng
- John McAslan + Partners
- Lahdelma Mahlamäki Architects

- Studio Libeskind

More information about the entries and images can be found here:

<https://competitions.malcolmreading.co.uk/holocaustmemorial/#shortlist>

Public feedback received as part of the consultation will be given to the independent Jury to consider before making its decision. The final decision for the schemes and winner will sit with the Jury.

The Jury includes:

- Sir Peter Bazalgette (Chair)
- Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, Communities and Local Government Secretary
- Rt Hon Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London
- Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis
- Samantha Cohen, Assistant Private Secretary to Her Majesty The Queen
- Charlotte Cohen, Holocaust Commission Youth Commissioner
- Alice Greenwald, President and CEO of 9/11 Memorial and Museum
- Ben Helfgott MBE, Holocaust survivor
- Natasha Kaplinsky OBE, Broadcaster
- The Lord Daniel Finkelstein OBE, Journalist
- Dame Julia Peyton-Jones DBE, Former Director of Serpentine Gallery
- Sarah Weir OBE, CEO of Design Council
- Paul Williams OBE, Stanton Williams Architects.

The opportunity for the public to feed in their view to the Jury was announced in January 2017 and a number of exhibitions have since taken place around the country. The Jury will meet to make its decision in September 2017 with a winner expected to be announced in October/November, subject to usual procurement processes.

The United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial International Design Competition is being run in accordance with EU procurement guidelines and the Public Contract Regulations 2015. This competition is being organised by Malcolm Reading Consultants and has been advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) on behalf of the United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial Foundation and the Department for Communities and Local Government.

Press release: New help for small businesses launched

A new online tax forum and dedicated webchat service for small businesses and the self-employed has been launched today by HMRC.

The Small Business Online Forum is a quick and easy way for small businesses

to get answers to their tax questions, as well as help with:

- starting a business
- support for growing a business – including taking on employees and expanding
- buying and selling abroad
- completing tax returns
- tax credits

Linked to the forum, HMRC's new dedicated webchat service offers direct support to businesses and the self-employed.

[Mel Stride](#), Financial Secretary to the Treasury and Paymaster General, said:

The UK's 5.4 million small businesses play a vital role in our economy. We want to help businesses get off the ground and support them as they grow.

That is why we are launching a new forum and webchat service which will give these companies useful hints and tips – including how to complete tax returns, grow a business and trade outside the UK – so that they can continue to flourish.

1. The Small Business Online Forum forms part of the government's business tax roadmap announced at Budget 2016.
2. A pilot was launched in March 2017 and since then the forum has grown to have more than a 1,000 registered users.
3. The forum does not deal with questions about taxpayers' individual circumstances. Any comments which include personal information will be deleted.
4. While no personal or case-specific information is posted on the forum, customers may be offered help through HMRC's webchat service and their personal case handled by an adviser.
5. Follow HMRC Press Office on [Twitter](#).
6. HMRC's Flickr channel can be found [here](#)

[Press release: How to watch marine wildlife responsibly](#)

As large numbers of visitors begin to flock to the Cornish coast, the Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code Group is sending out a timely reminder on how to responsibly enjoy watching marine wildlife such as dolphins and basking sharks.

The species most often affected are seabirds and seals as they come on to

land to rest, but dolphins and basking sharks close to shore will quickly attract a lot of attention, making them vulnerable to overcrowding or being chased and can lead to accidents.

The Cornwall Marine and Coastal Code group includes Cornwall Wildlife Trust, the RSPB, Cornwall Seal Group, National Trust, Marine Stranding Network and the British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR), Cornwall Council, Devon and Cornwall Police Marine & Coastal Policing Team, the Marine Management Organisation and Natural England.

Full guidelines can be found on the [Cornwall Wildlife Trust's website](#). These recommendations include:

- keep your distance from resting animals such as seals and seabirds on land
- remain calm and quiet so resting animals are not disturbed and scared off
- move slowly and avoid sudden changes in direction and speed if animals are nearby
- stay side on to the animals while watching them rather than approaching directly
- if there are other boats/kayaks etc nearby then ensure the animals have plenty of space and an obvious escape route should they choose to leave, and to not pursue them when they do

One such incident off Padstow in 2013 resulted in the death of a bottlenose dolphin calf from a local inshore pod, threatening the long-term survival of the group. [The people responsible were successfully prosecuted](#).

Dan Jarvis from BDMLR said:

The South West has an amazing range of marine species that are a big part of why lots of people love to visit the region, but sometimes people's encounters with our wildlife do not go well for the animals involved.

We are incredibly fortunate that we have these animals here in the first place and it is a privilege that we're able to see them, so we want to help people get the best out of these encounters by following some simple guidelines that will avoid causing distress and harm.

By encouraging people to use these guidelines, we hope that they in turn will share them with others, so that many more people are aware of how their actions, and those of others, can affect the behaviour of animals that need to use these habitats too. We are all out on the coast to enjoy the amazing environment we have here and we need to make sure the animals that live there are still able to enjoy it too, otherwise they could abandon the area and we all lose out.

Guidance for recreational boaters

The Green Blue, the joint environment campaign run by the Royal Yachting Association and British Marine, has worked with other organisations including the MMO to produce The Green Wildlife Guide for Boaters. This advises boaters on how to get the best experience out of their wildlife encounters by acting responsibly and cautiously to minimize the risk of disturbance while keeping participants and their boats safe.

The guide is [available online](https://thegreenblue.org.uk) or a hard copy can be obtained by emailing info@thegreenblue.org.uk.

Campaign Manager for The Green Blue, Kate Fortnam, said:

It is perfectly safe and lawful to view marine wildlife by adopting a few simple measures – acting responsibly and cautiously to minimise the risk of disturbance is always the safest course of action.

Visit thegreenblue.org.uk for your copy of The Green Wildlife Guide for Boaters, or drop us a line for a hard copy.

Reporting incidents of marine wildlife disturbance

If you see marine species such as dolphins, porpoise or whales being disturbed, please contact your [nearest MMO office](#) or local police force wildlife crime officer on 101.

Incidents of disturbance in Cornwall can be reported to the Cornwall Wildlife Trust's disturbance hotline on 0345 201 2626, which has seen a steady increase in the number of calls over the last few weeks with the warmer weather.

Laws protecting marine wildlife

Details of the laws protecting marine species can be found on [the Government's website](#). They have also been [previously explained by the MMO](#).