

Press release: Charities in Wales benefit from Tampon Tax Fund

The Tampon Tax Fund is designed to benefit charities that support women and girls, particularly those affected by violence and domestic abuse.

In 2016 / 17, the Tampon Tax Fund has awarded £15m across the UK.

The fund is equivalent to the amount HMRC estimate is raised from VAT on sanitary products. The fund was announced at Autumn Statement 2015.

The four Welsh projects to benefit from the fund are: Volunteering Matters (SAFE) in Gwent, North Wales Women's Centre, Rape and Sexual Abuse North Wales and the National Youth Advocacy Service in Wales.

Lord Nick Bourne, Parliamentary under Secretary of State for Wales, said:

This year's funding will benefit projects all over Wales and will help provide many women, girls and young children, some of them in vulnerable situations, with a better standard of living through education, support and self-help programmes.

This Government is a Government that works for everyone and this funding demonstrates its commitment to the union and supporting projects across the whole of the UK.

Rob Wilson, Minister of Civil Society said:

From Cornwall to Dundee, the Tampon Tax Fund continues to benefit organisations in every corner of the UK working to improve the lives of disadvantaged women and girls, including those who've been affected by violence.

This Fund is helping to improve lives, supporting our ambition to create a fairer, shared society for everyone. I'm glad that so many worthwhile organisations will benefit from this money.

An outline of the planned activity for each of the four Welsh charities is below:

- Volunteering Matters (SAFE) The SAFE ('Sexual Awareness for Everyone') project – This will improve the personal safety and maintain good sexual health of 300 young women (aged 16-35) with learning difficulties, from deprived areas in Gwent, South Wales through workshops, one-to-one peer

support and production and distribution of a SAFE card. Learning will be shared with the wider community by 50 of the young women, who will be trained as SAFE Champions and deliver peer support within local youth, educational and community services.

- North Wales Women's Centre – The project aims to improve the lives of 300 (minimum) disadvantaged women and girls targeting those with multiple and complex needs who are at risk of offending or reoffending. Existing issues for this group of women will be addressed whilst empowering them to be more resilient. This will be achieved by provision of community based support across North Wales where referred women will be assessed to identify their needs and a care plan will be developed with them. Learning will be shared by working with a wider group of community-based organisations to plan service provision for the future.
- Rape and Sexual Abuse North Wales – The aim is to pilot and evaluate, through partnership and collaboration, a self-help programme developed for survivors of sexual violence suffering with Sexual Trauma Specific Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (STS-PTSD). The project is to be trialled in three groups of eight annually, then expanded to groups of 12 once the pilot is complete. Following the pilot, they plan to train facilitators across Wales and the UK, to offer practical help to thousands of female survivors.
- National Youth Advocacy Service – The aim of this project is to improve the lives of young women and girls leaving the care system in Wales especially those who are pregnant, those at risk of teenage pregnancy, at risk of child sexual exploitation and care experienced parents. The project will be bespoke and tailored to the needs of the young person increasing their confidence and resilience and giving them information and support on sexual health, healthy relationships, gender equality and body image. In addition to establishing a number of support networks the project aims to identify what works best for women and girls in this disadvantage cohort and having learned these lessons will look to seek funding to roll this project out to other parts of the country.

News story: Restrictions on Schedule 6 (Exemptions for small pet animals) active substances

Details of VMD review of the approved active substances on the exemption for

small pet animals list which may be marketed for use as anaesthetics in fish.

The VMD has recently reviewed the approved active substances list on the exemption for small pet animals (also known as the Small Animal Exemption Scheme) which may be marketed for use as anaesthetics in fish. The indications for products containing these actives are now restricted to state for mild sedation and euthanasia of diseased fish only.

The basis of the change is the VMD's reviewed position regarding interpretation of the Veterinary Surgeons Act and conclusion that anaesthesia should be considered an act of veterinary surgery.

The table listing the approved actives has been amended to include the following warning:

Products containing [approved active] may be indicated for mild sedation and also for euthanasia of diseased fish. Indications for anaesthesia are not permitted in products marketed under this exemption.

The list of all active substances approved under the exemption and further guidance on the can be found on [Guidance for Exemption from Authorisation for medicines for small pet animals](#)

News story: HMRC launch criminal investigation into global financial institution

HM Revenue and Customs is getting increasingly tougher on offshore tax evasion, collecting more than £2.7 billion since 2010. Yesterday, in partnership with authorities in the Netherlands, Australia, Germany and France, HMRC launched a criminal investigation into suspected tax evasion and money laundering by a global financial institution.

Here is our full statement:

Yesterday HMRC, working with our international partners, launched a criminal investigation into suspected tax evasion and money laundering by a global financial institution and certain of its employees. The first phase of the investigation, which will see further, targeted, activity over the coming weeks, is focused on senior employees from within the institution, along with a number

of its customers.

The international reach of this investigation sends a clear message that there is no hiding place for those seeking to evade tax. Promoters and facilitators of tax evasion schemes, and their customers, need to wake up to reality and accept that attempting to hide wealth overseas, or within institutions, doesn't work and doesn't place them out of our reach. Alongside this new investigation we are currently investigating more than 1,100 cases of offshore evasion around the world, and have brought in more than £2.7 billion from offshore tax evaders since 2010.

As this an ongoing investigation HMRC are unable to provide any further detail at this time.

The government has introduced tough new powers, increased penalties, and game-changing measures to help us tackle offshore tax evasion, and as recently as the summer Budget 2015, gave HMRC an additional £800 million to invest in compliance and tax evasion work. Additionally, the Government has also been pivotal in increasing global financial transparency among more than 100 countries, including British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies, by automatically sharing offshore account data. This additional data will help identify and pursue the tiny minority of tax evaders still hiding their money offshore.

The UK is also introducing a new corporate criminal offence for corporations that fail to prevent the facilitation of tax evasion. This new power, coming in this year, will ensure that those who fail to show due diligence over the services they provide could face prosecution.

Last year HMRC collected and protected a record-breaking £26 billion in compliance yield – money that would otherwise have gone unpaid. The offshore specialists in HMRC's Customer Compliance Fraud Investigation Service are currently investigating more than 1,100 cases of offshore evasion around the world, with more than 100 individuals subject to current criminal investigation.

[News story: New controls for managing email correspondence](#)

Organisations that use our portal will have more control over how they manage the email correspondence we send, from 3 April.

Since 13 March, customers who have sent us a registration application online

via the HM Land Registry portal, our online transactional channel, have [received correspondence related to that application by email](#).

Typically, we send correspondence to the email address associated with each individual's portal ID, but we understand different customers have different needs so we gave:

- individuals the ability to specify a different email address on an application-by-application basis
- Business Unit Administrators (BUAs – portal administrators who can create and update users) an option to assign a single correspondence email address for all portal users within their organisation.

BUAs told us they would like additional controls, which we are adding on 3 April.

From 3 April, BUAs will be able to:

- control whether their users can choose an alternative to the collective email address (when defined). This will help organisations ensure any [requisitions](#) or other correspondence reaches the most appropriate address
- [set different collective email addresses](#) for different groups of users within their organisation.

BUAs can find out how to make these changes in our [portal guide: update group](#).

[News story: Defence Secretary welcomes US Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis to the UK for the first time](#)

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon welcomed Secretary Jim Mattis to London today for his first visit to the UK as US Defense Secretary. They reviewed a number of defence and security issues, including the need for NATO modernisation and increased defence spending by all members, progress in the fight against extremism, including Daesh in Iraq and Syria, and joint equipment and defence trade programmes.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

We have no closer friend than the United States and across the globe our nations are standing side by side in defending our values. Together we're showing leadership on the world stage –

tackling extremism, standing up to Russian aggression and modernising NATO, making it fitter, faster and more agile.

Sir Michael outlined at today's meeting how Britain is playing a leading role in European and global defence and security, and wants a deep and special economic and security partnership with the EU after the UK leaves. The Defence Secretary confirmed that as of next week, all 800 British troops would be deployed in Estonia as part of NATO's enhanced Forward Presence (eFP), alongside over 300 British Army vehicles. And continuing UK and US forces' long history of joint operations, the UK is supporting the US-led eFP in Poland, contributing hundreds of troops and more than 50 vehicles. British armour transporters will be helping to move US tanks across Poland, underlining the depth of UK/US cooperation.

Sir Michael and Secretary Mattis also agreed steps for NATO modernisation, including simpler command structures, and reviewed the pressing need for NATO members to meet their 2% defence spending commitments. The Defence Secretary called on NATO members not meeting the 2% spending commitment to increase their defence budget annually in real terms, in order to demonstrate greater burden sharing.

Both the Defence Secretary and Secretary Mattis reviewed progress in the fight against Daesh and agreed to keep up the campaign momentum, with Iraqi forces liberating more territory from Daesh's tyranny in western Mosul and planning the campaign to isolate and then liberate Raqqa in Syria. Britain and the US are leading the Coalition effort to defeat Daesh in Iraq and Syria, striking extremist positions from the air and training the Iraqi security forces on the ground.

Visiting the UK for the first time in his new role, US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said:

I thank Minister Fallon for the very warm welcome to the UK on my first visit as Secretary of Defense. The special relationship is a source of strength for our two nations, standing together in defense of our freedoms. It is demonstrated daily in our military-to-military interactions across a host of domains, and our relationship grows in strength with the mutual respect and friendship we share.

During a press conference at Lancaster House, Sir Michael announced a £90 million investment to support the UK's new F-35 Lightning aircraft. The F-35 programme is a joint undertaking with the US that will deliver cutting-edge aircraft to British and American Armed Forces. This multi-million pound contract, providing maintenance, training and logistic services at RAF Marham in Norfolk – the future home of the jets' squadrons – will sustain hundreds of highly skilled British jobs.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

Nothing demonstrates the strength of our relationship better than our joint work on the most advanced combat aircraft in the world – the F-35. The UK is proud to be the future repair hub for all the European jets. This additional investment at RAF Marham will ensure that we have a formidable fighting force that, at a time of growing danger, will help us work with our US partners to promote international peace and security.

In testament to the British skill base, the UK has been chosen by the US F-35 Program Office to be a global repair hub, providing maintenance, overhaul and upgrade services for European F-35s. The deal builds on the strong foundations of Britain's pre-eminent and enduring defence partnership with the US, and will help create hundreds of high-end jobs, safeguard thousands more and be a substantial boost to UK exports.

This new £90 million contract, placed through the F-35 Joint Program Office with Lockheed Martin, in partnership with BAE Systems, will support services being operated out of RAF Marham. The new support services contract comes as the UK gets ready to receive its ninth F-35 aircraft, which will be based at US Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, South Carolina. A further £167 million investment was announced last year for the construction of three new state-of-the-art buildings at the Norfolk base and construction of these facilities is well under way. In March the F-35 also successfully conducted first firing trials using MBDA's Advanced Short Range Air to Air Missile (ASRAAM), marking the first time a British-designed missile has been fired from the F-35.