

Joint statement on death penalty in the Republic of Botswana

Press release

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The High Commissioners of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand to the Republic of Botswana have issued the following statement:

In light of the executions of Mr Wedu Mosalagae and Mr Kutlo Setima which took place on 8 February 2021, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand reaffirm our strong opposition to capital punishment in all circumstances, as a matter of principle.

The death penalty undermines human dignity and there is no conclusive evidence of its deterrent value. Any miscarriage of justice is irreversible and irreparable.

The African continent has joined the growing trend towards abolition of the death penalty worldwide, with 80% of the members of the African Union having already abolished the death penalty in law or in practice.

We continue to call on Botswana to initiate a public debate on its use of the death penalty, as the Government of Botswana already agreed in the Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council in January 2018. We stand ready to share our experience with the process of abolishing the death penalty.

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New 'Nightingale court' opens in Taunton

- Taunton Nightingale court begins hearing cases this week
- 42 temporary courtrooms now in operation nationwide
- part of government's plan to ensure justice continues throughout the pandemic

The council-owned space conveniently adjoins Taunton Magistrates' Court and was previously used to train councillors in how to write budgets and deliver speeches. The venue will host both a magistrates' and a Crown courtroom – providing vital capacity to minimise delays.

Temporary Nightingale courts, have been set up across the country to enable more socially distanced trials to take place, ensuring justice continues to be served.

This is because more space is required than was previously the case due to the need to keep everyone distanced in court buildings – such as jurors, witnesses, staff, legal professionals and judges.

Courts Minister, Chris Philp MP, said:

This new Nightingale court will help to reduce delays and deliver speedier justice for victims in Taunton, and I'm grateful to Somerset County Council for providing the building.

This is part of our efforts to ensure courts recover as quickly as possible from the pandemic – building on progress which has already seen magistrates' backlogs fall and the number of cases being dealt with in the crown court reach pre-pandemic levels in December.

The Ministry of Justice has spared no expense in its continued efforts to keep the justice system running during this pandemic.

£142m has been spent on upgrading court buildings and technology, alongside £110m to increase capacity – making over a quarter of a billion-pound investment in court recovery this year.

1,600 extra staff are being hired, plexiglass screens set up in more than 450 rooms, 20,000 remote hearings take place each week, and over 290 covid-safe jury trial courtrooms are now in operation.

The impact of these measures is already being seen. The backlog in the magistrates' courts has fallen consistently since August last year and in the

full week before Christmas, Crown Courts resolved more cases than they received for the first time since the covid pandemic began.

These efforts will be supported by an extra £337m announced in the recent Spending Review to deliver swifter justice and support victims in 2021 to 2022, while £76m will further increase capacity in family courts and tribunals.

Every HMCTS building – including Nightingale courts – meets the government’s covid-secure guidelines, and public health experts have confirmed the arrangements remain sufficient to deal with the current strains of the virus.

1. More than £110m is being invested in a range of measures to tackle the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19), including the recruitment of 1,600 additional staff and opening more Nightingale courts.
2. We’re also spending £153m to improve court and tribunal buildings – the biggest single investment in court estate maintenance for more than 20 years.
3. This progress will be bolstered by an extra [£337m the government is spending next year](#) to deliver swifter justice and support victims, while an additional £76 million will further increase capacity in family courts and tribunals.
4. [Details on measures to keep courts safe, secure and clean](#).
5. More details on the [Nightingale courtrooms in operation](#).

[Recognising our apprentices during National Apprenticeship Week 2021](#)

Last year we blogged about [why apprenticeships matter at DVLA](#) and the importance of supporting our apprentices with their personal development. As one of the largest employers in South Wales, with more than 6,000 people, apprentices can combine working with studying to gain skills in a specific role.



Nicole Powell

If you've ever wondered about a career in DVLA, now is the time to consider an apprenticeship. It's a fantastic opportunity to gain more qualifications or get new skills whilst in employment.

Apprenticeships give you the opportunity to gain nationally recognised qualifications in occupational areas and can help you achieve the job or position you would like in the future.

We currently have 92 apprentices across the agency studying towards a range of qualifications from foundation apprenticeships (level 2), apprenticeships (level 3) and higher apprenticeships (level 4, 5 and 6) in a wide range of professions from finance to administration, IT to communication, to nurses and doctors. All contributing to the long-term future of the agency.

Learn what it's really like to become an apprentice at DVLA

Hear some first-hand accounts from some of our current apprentices within our Information Technology Services (ITS).

Hallie Rees, recently completed a [level 3 apprentice in IT, software, web and telecoms](#). She applied for an apprenticeship after hearing about the fantastic career opportunities in DVLA:

An apprenticeship is the perfect starting point for someone who, like me, is ready to take that next step and get a full-time job.

The part I have enjoyed most about the apprenticeship, within ITS, was that I was able to move around different areas of DVLA. This

allowed me to experience lots of different elements of the organisation to see what I'm good at and discover what I enjoy doing the most.

From my college work and the support from my colleagues and apprenticeship ambassadors, I have managed to secure a permanent full-time job in my current role as [an EUC engineer](#).

Without this apprenticeship, I wouldn't have known where to start. It's allowed me to develop the hands-on skills that are used in the business which has set me up for my future.

We're proud that our apprentices come from all walks of life and at different points in their career. The flexibility of apprenticeships means that it's never too late to change direction and pursue your dream career.

Cristian Vladut began his apprenticeship in L3 Diploma in ICT Professional Competence, after completing a master's degree in construction management.

I was looking for an opportunity to get hands-on experience solving problems involving computers, specifically in the software area. One might think it is unconventional to become an apprentice after finishing a master's degree. However, I put my trust in DVLA and Gower College Swansea and knew that I would be studying modules that would help me achieve my dream career – a software engineer.

The apprenticeship helped me to secure a permanent job, a safe environment and a place where I can grow and socialise with open minded people.

To find out more about apprenticeships visit: www.apprenticeships.gov.uk

Roles at DVLA

DVLA will support you in reaching your full potential, offering rewarding and challenging jobs, training plans and ongoing development opportunities.

If you're inspired by Hallie's experience, [we're recruiting for a Technical Infrastructure Engineer](#) to join our team. You'll be a key member of the team who has engineering skills and in-depth product knowledge. The closing date is Sunday 14 February.

If you fancy a career at DVLA make sure you keep an eye on [Civil Service Jobs](#).

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Government to bring an end to unsafe cladding with multi-billion pound intervention

- Housing Secretary announces the government will pay for the removal of unsafe cladding for all leaseholders in high-rise buildings, providing reassurance and protecting them from costs
- New levy and tax on developers to ensure industry contributes
- Measures will boost the housing market and free up homeowners to once again buy and sell their properties

Hundreds of thousands of leaseholders will be protected from the cost of replacing unsafe cladding on their homes, as Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick unveiled a five-point plan which will provide reassurance to homeowners and bring confidence to the housing market.

With an unprecedented £5 billion investment in building safety, including £3.5 billion announced today (10 February 2021), the Housing Secretary confirmed to the House of Commons that the government will fully fund the cost of replacing unsafe cladding for all leaseholders in residential buildings 18 metres (6 storeys) and over in England.

This will ensure funding is targeted at the highest risk buildings in line with longstanding independent expert advice and evidence, with Home Office analysis of fire and rescue service statistics showing buildings between 18 and 30 metres are four times as likely to suffer a fire with fatalities or serious casualties than apartment buildings in general.

Lower-rise buildings, with a lower risk to safety, will gain new protection from the costs of cladding removal with a generous new scheme offered to buildings between 11 and 18 metres. This will pay for cladding removal – where it is needed – through a long-term, low interest, government-backed financing arrangement.

Under the scheme, no leaseholder will ever pay more than £50 a month towards the removal of unsafe cladding. This will provide reassurance and security to leaseholders, and mortgage providers can be confident that where cladding removal is needed, properties will be worth lending against.

The government is working with industry to reduce the need for EWS1 forms, preventing leaseholders from facing delays and allowing hundreds of thousands of homes to be sold, bought, or re-mortgaged once again.

The Housing Secretary today announced plans to introduce a, 'Gateway 2' developer levy. The proposed levy will be targeted and apply when developers

seek permission to develop certain high-rise buildings in England.

In addition, a new tax will be introduced for the UK residential property development sector. This will raise at least £2 billion over a decade to help pay for cladding remediation costs. The tax will ensure that the largest property developers make a fair contribution to the remediation programme, reflecting the benefit they will derive from restoring confidence to the UK housing market. The government will consult on the policy design in due course.

The government will protect future generations from similar mistakes by bringing forward legislation this year to tighten the regulation of building safety and to review the construction products regime to prevent malpractice arising again.

Today's measures will mean people living in homes which they have been prevented from selling, or re-mortgaging, through no fault of their own, will now be able to move on with their lives.

Housing Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

This is a comprehensive plan to remove unsafe cladding, support leaseholders, restore confidence to this part of the housing market and ensure this situation never arises again.

Our unprecedented intervention means the hundreds of thousands of leaseholders who live in higher-rise buildings will now pay nothing towards the cost of removing unsafe cladding.

Remedying the failures of building safety cannot just be a responsibility for taxpayers. That is why we will also be introducing a levy and tax on developers to contribute to righting the wrongs of the past.

These measures will provide certainty to residents and lenders, boosting the housing market, reinstating the value of properties and getting buying and selling homes back on track. We are working with lenders and surveyors to make this happen.

Our landmark intervention will make homes safer and free those who did the right thing – saving for years to get on the property ladder – to enjoy the homes in which they have invested so much.

Barclays:

Barclays welcomes this announcement as a positive step forward. These changes will bring greater certainty and clarity for homeowners, prospective buyers and surveyors.

We expect that will make it far easier for buyers, sellers and lenders to value properties, aiding this part of the housing market to start moving again.

Barclays remains open to support our customers and prospective buyers with any of their home ownership needs, including in this part of the market.

Joe Garner – CEO Nationwide Building Society said:

Nationwide welcomes the £3.5 billion grant funding the government has announced to ensure the cladding on peoples' home is safe and to protect the people who live in them. This is a decisive step forward which we hope brings some relief to people worried about the safety of their homes.

Supporting people who find themselves living in this difficult position could not be more important. We look forward to working with government, lenders and other interested parties to understand the details and implement the initiative quickly.

The government is aware that securing appropriate professional indemnity insurance to cover the completion of EWS1 forms is a major barrier to qualified professionals undertaking EWS1 forms. The government is therefore committing today to work towards a targeted, state-backed indemnity scheme for qualified professionals unable to obtain professional indemnity insurance for the completion of EWS1 forms.

The government will work closely with industry to design an appropriate scheme. Further details on the scheme, including eligibility and the claims process, will be provided in the coming weeks.

The Grenfell tragedy laid bare failings in the building industry dating back 30 years. Today's announcement is a further step by the government to bring about the biggest changes to building safety in a generation, ensuring people are safe and feel safe in their own homes.

The measures build on steps already taken to support leaseholders, including £1.6 billion of funding to remediate unsafe cladding, the £30 million [Waking Watch fund](#) to help end unfair and excessive costs and new legislation in the Building Safety Bill which will ensure homes are made and kept safer in future.

Five-point plan to bring an end to unsafe cladding

1. Government will pay for the removal of unsafe cladding for leaseholders in all residential buildings 18 metres (6 storeys) and over in England
2. Generous finance scheme to provide reassurance for leaseholders in buildings between 11 and 18 metres (4 to 6 storeys), ensuring they never pay more than £50 a month for cladding removal

3. An industry levy and tax to ensure developers play their part
4. A world-class new safety regime to ensure a tragedy like Grenfell never happens again
5. Providing confidence to this part of the housing market including lenders and surveyors

All buildings 18 metres and over will be covered by the fund. See [further detail on building eligibility](#)

See [Home Office analysis of fires and fatalities statistics](#). Statistics were provided by fire and rescue services via the Incident Recording System and building data from Ordnance Survey.

A new tax will be introduced for the UK residential property development sector in 2022.

Government supports the guidance produced by RICS as an appropriate, risk-based and proportionate basis on which to proceed with valuation assessments, in line with the building safety Consolidated Advice Note published in January 2020.

In addition government will work with industry to ensure consistency between the RICS guidance, the forthcoming BSI Publicly Available Specification 9980 for cladding fire risk assessment, the imminent guidance on conducting Fire Risk Assessments as part of the clarified Fire Safety Order and the regulatory requirements flowing from the forthcoming Building Safety Bill.

The devolved administrations will receive additional funding through the Barnett formula, except where new departmental spending is funded by an England-only levy (where the devolved administrations can instead implement their own levies should they choose to do so).

[Magnox supports scheme to tackle food poverty](#)

Bwyd Da Môn is a collaboration between many organisations including Isle of Anglesey County Council, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, Ynys Môn Citizens Advice, Coleg Llandrillo Menai and Anglesey Food Bank.

£8,540 has been donated from the Magnox socio-economic fund to purchase commercial fridges and freezers for a new community not-for-profit shop in Llangefni.

Bwyd Da Môn serves the whole of Anglesey, tackling food poverty and reducing food waste. The shop is a membership-based food club which re-distributes excess fresh produce from local supermarkets and food producers that would

otherwise go to landfill.

Stuart Law, Wylfa Site Director, said:

Magnox is proud to support this great initiative which provides a valuable service to the whole of Anglesey during these difficult times.

Working alongside our stakeholders in the community, we have helped a number of organisations and charities to achieve their goals by providing funding and support. It is our intention to make sure that our socio-economic activity continues to deliver positive outcomes and make the greatest possible impact.

In December alone, Bwyd Da Môn handed out over 120 parcels, with volunteers giving up more than 150 hours of their time in the run up to Christmas.

Glynne Roberts, Chair of Bwyd Da Môn, added:

Bwyd Da Môn is an invaluable scheme which will enable the residents of Anglesey to access good quality food at an affordable price, and to play their part in eradicating food waste.

But the scheme can only thrive due to the support received from partner organisations in helping us to set up the different elements that are essential to the project. In this respect, the funding provided from Magnox enabled us to purchase high quality fridges and freezers, which are a core element of the overall project, and will be crucial to our success.

Bwyd Da Môn is now working on building up stock levels and developing ready meals with food waste that needs to be used immediately. In the future it also hopes to introduce a community cooking skills education programme where families will be encouraged to produce fresh home-cooked, nutritious meals.

Magnox is committed to providing and enabling socio-economic support for the communities in which it operates. Our community investment is supported by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority.