

Creating a new opportunity for customers to have their say

Honest and insightful feedback is key to creating a positive customer journey. That's why we are establishing a new customer panel; to receive regular, impartial opinions from our customers – past, present and future. The new panel will enhance our understanding of our customers' experience and identify where improvements can be made, as we drive forward our central commitment to deliver an outstanding customer experience that enables customers to invest in their futures.

We are always working to improve the student finance experience and have a number of significant changes planned for this year, including the introduction of our new Customer Engagement Management system. Our Corporate Plan, published at the end of last year, sets out how we will deliver our goals and strategy over the next three years.

www.gov.uk/government/news/a-blog-on-slcs-corporate-plan-by-ceo-paula-sussex

Our ambition is that the panel will challenge our understanding of the complete customer journey, taking into account all the touchpoints that those who use our services experience throughout the student finance process, from pre-application to end of loan.

While we already work extensively with customers to research their needs, the introduction of this panel will allow us to facilitate open discussions with a small group that represents a cross section of the user journey. This group will provide invaluable insight into our processes and, most importantly, how these can be improved to enable us to provide the best possible service for students and those who are repaying their student loans.

We are currently recruiting and looking for panel members with a willingness to share their stories of the student finance journey and participate in discussions and workshops that explore customer experience issues. The more diverse the customer panel is, the better understanding we will have to inform our future service development. Alongside customers of Student Finance England (SFE), Student Finance Wales (SFW), Student Finance Northern Ireland (SFNI) and the Student Awards Agency Scotland; we are also looking for members who are future student finance customers, and for members who are in repayment. We welcome applications from individuals, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic background, religion and / or belief to represent a cross section of our customers.

In return, panel members will receive training and support will be provided from the outset to give them the background information and skills required to be an effective panel member. Skills will be developed on an on-going basis and members will be paid for their time. Members will be appointed for one year with the option to continue for a further year and the panel will meet at least four times per year.

If you are interested in helping us improve the experience of our customers, then apply to join our Student Finance Customer Panel online. Applications close on 24 January 2021.

Application for future students –

www.civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk/csr/jobs.cgi?vxsys=4&vxvac=92908

Application for current students

–www.civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk/csr/jobs.cgi?vxsys=4&vxvac=93134

Application for graduates and those in repayment –

www.civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk/csr/jobs.cgi?vxsys=4&vxvac=93135

David Wallace is Deputy CEO & Chief Customer Officer at SLC.

SLC recruits members for new Student Finance Customer Panel

The new panel will enhance SLC's understanding of the customer journey – it will inform, shape and challenge SLC's customer experience strategy as the organisation strives to deliver on its ambition of providing an outstanding customer experience.

SLC's panel will consist of 16 members with representation from customers of Student Finance England (SFE), Student Finance Wales (SFW), Student Finance Northern Ireland (SFNI) and the Student Awards Agency Scotland, in addition to prospective students and those currently in repayment. Members will be appointed for one year with the option to continue for a further year and the panel will meet at least four times per year.

David Wallace, Deputy CEO & Chief Customer Officer at SLC, said: "We are committed to delivering the experience that our customers expect and the Student Finance Customer Panel has been created to focus exclusively on where we can make improvements in the customer journey.

"SLC already works extensively with customers to research user needs and to test the best ways of meeting these needs. This new panel will operate alongside that work to ensure that our customers are at the heart of all our engagement activity.

"We are particularly keen to recruit a broad and diverse range of future, current and former students and welcome applications from individuals, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic background, religion and / or belief to represent a cross section of our customers.

“The opinions of the new panel will ensure we consider our interaction with customers from every perspective and at every stage of the journey. Their contribution will be invaluable in helping us to deliver an outstanding experience for all customers.”

Anyone interested in joining the Student Finance Customer Panel can apply online. Panel members will be paid for their time, dependent on participation in panel meetings, plus expenses in line with SLC’s travel and expenses policy.

Application for future students –

www.civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk/csr/jobs.cgi?vxsys=4&vxvac=92908

Application for current students

–www.civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk/csr/jobs.cgi?vxsys=4&vxvac=93134

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Improving fish populations in the East Midlands

The fish have been used to stock the River Derwent in Derbyshire and the River Soar in Leicestershire.

2,000 juvenile barbel and 1,000 chub have been released into several locations of the River Derwent, between Draycott and Duffield, and between Cotes and Kegworth on the River Soar, to provide a welcome boost to the fish populations and angler experience in the area.

The fish stocking is part of a second year of a barbel and chub recruitment project in response to numerous reports in recent years of declining catches of juvenile species on the River Derwent and River Soar.

With angling allowed as exercise in the current lockdown restrictions, as long as anglers adhere to the rules on staying local and limit this to once a day, with no overnight fishing, and keep to social distancing, now is an excellent time to enjoy the sport.

Responsible fishing provides a good opportunity to connect with nature and feel the range of benefits doing so can bring. However, it is important to remember that a valid rod fishing licence is required and anglers must adhere to fishing byelaws and fishery rules.

Gary Briggs, Fisheries Technical Officer for the Environment Agency, said:

The East Midlands Fisheries team has been carrying out the second year of a project to improve fish populations in the region, in order to enhance angler experience.

In response to angler reports of declining catches of juvenile barbel and chub in recent years, we've implemented this project to assist the recovery of coarse fish populations.

To help with the effective management of future river fish populations, we have marked 2,000 barbel and 1,000 chub reared at the Environment Agency's National Coarse Fish Farm at Calverton with blue dye near their ventral fins before stocking them in the rivers.

With the help of local angling clubs, we can then monitor the fish catch data in an attempt to understand more about the recruitment and distribution of these coarse species in our local rivers.

Anyone who catches one of the marked fish is asked to inform the Environment Agency fisheries team so they can monitor the data. Please send details, including the date and time of the catch, location, length of fish, and ideally a photo showing the blue dye mark on the fish, to:
[FisheriesEMD@environment-agency.gov.uk]FisheriesEMD@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Buying a rod fishing licence is quick and easy. Licences cost just £30 for a year (concessions available) and are available from www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence; by phoning 0344 800 5386; or at your local Post Office.

Notes to editors

- All income from rod fishing licence sales is used to fund our work to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries. This includes improving habitats for fish, reinvesting money back to facilities and clubs for anglers, tackling illegal fishing and working with partners to encourage more people to give fishing a go.
 - The Environment Agency's National Coarse Fish Farm at Calverton remains our principal supply of coarse fish for restocking. In 2019, the farm produced 520,475 fish of 9 species, including barbel, chub, dace and grayling and 7,600,000 advanced reared larvae for restocking into rivers following pollution incidents or to help restore fish stocks in rivers recovering from poor environmental quality as well as supporting developing fisheries.
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Sky to sponsor the COP26 summit in Glasgow

- Sky will join National Grid, NatWest Group, Scottish Power and SSE as Principle Partners for the COP26 summit
- Sky announce a new ambitious climate action strategy in addition to their Sky Zero campaign
- UK businesses continue to show commitment in pushing forward climate action

The UK has today revealed Sky as a new sponsor for COP26 as it gears up for a year of climate action ahead of the international climate change summit in Glasgow this November.

Sky becomes the fifth Principal Partner who will support the delivery of a successful and ambitious COP in November. SSE, ScottishPower, NatWest Group and National Grid were announced in November 2020.

Through these partnerships, the COP26 Presidency is showing a clear commitment to working with businesses who are taking real steps towards net zero.

In February 2020, Sky set its commitment to be net zero carbon by 2030 across its entire value chain. Since then, Sky has become the first broadcaster to sign up to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Sports for Action Framework and has achieved CarbonNeutral® certification for all of its UK Sky Original productions.

Sky is also building what aims to be the most environmentally friendly film and TV studios in the world at Sky Studios Elstree.

And today, Sky has announced a series of new commitments for its TV productions. Every future Sky Original will now adhere to clear guidelines to help achieve Albert Sustainable Production Certification, in addition, Sky Sports is targeting certification for every live host broadcast in 2021.

COP26 President Alok Sharma said:

This is an exciting year as we prepare for COP26 in Glasgow. Businesses have a key part to play in the summit and in building back greener, so I am delighted to welcome Sky as a Principal Partner for COP26. Their Sky Zero campaign shows how ambitious they are to take meaningful action for the future of our planet and I look forward to working together in the run up to COP26

Jeremy Darroch, Executive Chairman Sky, said:

This year will require us all to focus and adapt as we accelerate our efforts to tackle the climate crisis. At Sky, we believe that our voice and reach can play a vital role in empowering our customers, partners and industry peers to build a better world, because it's the actions of business, the government and individuals, that will define our generation. I hope Sky's new Planet Test and Sustainable Production Principles will spur others to make the transition to net zero with us.

Notes to editors

For press queries contact COP26media@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

- Principal Partners are the top tier of sponsorship for COP26.
- We will release information on the details of sponsorship agreements after the event.
- We are ensuring that COP26 provides value for money for the taxpayer.
- All sponsors have committed to the Science-Based Targets initiative, this requires them to set ambitious targets for emissions reductions, including having a credible action plan. All in line with what the latest climate science says is necessary to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Sky

Through its Sky Zero campaign, Sky plans to:

- Transform its business to achieve net zero carbon emissions across its entire value chain by 2030 – this includes its supply chain, TV productions, use of its products in customer homes and the transition of 5,000 vehicles to a zero emissions fleet
- Help millions of customers understand and reduce their carbon footprint
- Work with policymakers to create a supportive environment that allows businesses to meet ambitious carbon targets

More details can be found here: <https://www.skygroup.sky/sky-zero>

The Science Based Targets initiative

- SBTi mobilizes companies to set science-based targets and boost their competitive advantage in the transition to the low-carbon economy.
 - It is a collaboration between CDP, the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), World Resources Institute (WRI) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and one of the We Mean Business Coalition commitments.
 - The initiative defines and promotes best practice in science-based target setting, offers resources and guidance to reduce barriers to adoption, and independently assesses and approves companies' targets.
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Transport update: M25 Junction 10 and A3 Wisley Interchange decision extension



I have been asked by my Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State, to make this written Ministerial statement. This statement concerns the application made under the Planning Act 2008 for the proposed alteration and upgrading by Highways England of the existing M25 Junction 10 Roundabout.

Under section 107(1) of the Planning Act 2008, the Secretary of State must make his decision within 3 months of receipt of the examining authority's report unless exercising the power under section 107(3) to extend the deadline and make a statement to the House of Parliament announcing the new deadline. The Secretary of State received the examining authority's report on the M25 Junction 10/A3 Wisley Interchange development consent order application on 12 October 2020 and the original deadline for a decision was 12 January 2021.

The deadline for the decision is to be extended to 12 May 2021 (an extension of 4 months) to enable the Secretary of State to consult further on the application including on the question of appropriate provision of replacement land to compensate for the proposed special category land to be compulsorily purchased under the development consent order.

The decision to set a new deadline is without prejudice to the decision on whether to grant development consent.

Published 12 January 2021