

[News story: 2019 Clinical Excellence Awards round opens](#)



The Advisory Committee on Clinical Excellence Awards (ACCEA) is now accepting applications to the 2019 national Clinical Excellence Awards competition.

Consultants and academic GPs working for the NHS in England and Wales can apply for new national awards and for renewals due in 2019.

Current award holders will need to submit a renewal application if:

- they received their current award in the 2015 round
- their award was last renewed in 2014 (awarded in 2010, 2005, 2000)

In some cases, award holders will be renewing out of the usual cycle. Awards are reviewed earlier if there is a change in job or a significant change in job plan.

Applicants should [read the 2019 application guidance](#) before starting an application on [our online application system](#).

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[News story: Passenger views sought on bid to extend pay-as-you-go on rail network](#)

- Rail Minister launches consultation on possible roll out of pay-as-you-go (PAYG) to more rail stations.
- PAYG, along with smartcards and barcode options, can make passenger journeys faster and more convenient.

- Aim is to build on 'smart ticketing' alternatives to paper tickets that already cover almost all of the network.

The views of the travelling public will be at the heart of the government's renewed drive to make 'smart ticketing' on the rail network the norm rather than the exception, Rail Minister Andrew Jones announced today (7 February 2019).

Launched today, a 12-week public consultation will seek views from passengers and other rail stakeholders on the potential to make PAYG – swiping in and out at the ticket barrier with a bank or smart card – accepted more widely.

With smart cards and barcodes already providing an alternative to existing paper tickets across almost all the UK rail network, the government's ambition is to drive this even further forward by seeking the public's views on how to roll out PAYG to more stations.

Feedback from the consultation of passengers in the south east will not only inform any roll-out of the technology in the region, but will also be used when considering how to implement PAYG more widely across other urban or commuter areas in the future.

Rail Minister Andrew Jones said:

We want to make rail journeys simpler and easier for passengers. Smart ticketing is the modern answer – offering simpler fares, fairer deals and less confusion for passengers.

This consultation is about finding out what works for people, and we want to know how pay-as-you-go could make life easier for passengers who make hundreds of millions of journeys each year.

We have already invested £80 million in smart ticketing nationally and this has helped to speed up smartcard roll-out so that smart tickets are available across almost all the network.

Dependent on the outcome of the consultation, by 2020, the government's ambition is to see PAYG rolled out across more regional and urban commuter areas, delivering the kind of system that already exists in London.

As part of this, the Department for Transport (DfT) is requiring new rail franchisees to introduce PAYG in commuter areas and is already supporting Transport for the North's ambitious plans to roll it out across public transport in the north.

News story: Potential of light rail schemes hailed for future urban travel

- minister Jesse Norman launches call for evidence to seek views on the potential for new light rail and other rapid transit solutions in English towns and cities
- announcement made on visit to Midlands Metro Extension in Centenary Square, Birmingham, funded by £60 million government grant
- light rail and tram journeys already account for 3% of all public transport journeys in England

New light rail and other rapid transit solutions could be integral to our future transport networks across England's town and cities, Light Rail Minister Jesse Norman will announce today (7 February 2019).

The announcement came as the minister visited the extension of the Midland Metro light rail system in Birmingham – one of the 8 light rail systems in England responsible for 267 million journeys every year – to see how similar networks could rolled out across the country.

The call for evidence offers an opportunity to understand the role light rail systems and other systems, including very light rail, ultra-light rail and other automated guided transit systems, can play in the future of urban mobility, delivering environmentally-friendly, accessible and modern options for passengers.

It also aims to discover how future schemes can integrate seamlessly with new trends such as autonomous vehicles, in addition to buses, cycling and walking.

Transport Minister Jesse Norman said:

The Midlands Metro network shows how government support can help to create a sustainable, accessible and innovative light rail system, which forms an integral part of a modern urban transport network.

This is a great time to explore the incredible potential for light rail schemes across the country. Today's wide-ranging call for evidence seeks new ideas and new support for the next generation of light rail, so that we make existing systems work better, and can work with cities and towns across the UK to create new ones.

The [Midlands Metro extension](#) – adding an additional 5 tram stops between New Street Station to Five Ways roundabout in Edgbaston – has benefitted from a £60 million government grant.

Using battery technology, with part of the scheme constructed without

overhead lines, the extension is helping to provide faster, more frequent and environmentally friendly journeys across the city.

The network previously benefitted from a £250 million allocation from the [Transforming Cities Fund](#), designed to promote growth and improve transport links for commuters, which delivered the extension from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill.

The same round of funding also gave £83 million to Transport for Greater Manchester to support the procurement of 27 additional Metrolink trams in Manchester. Transport Secretary Chris Grayling recently visited Manchester to discuss how an innovative tram-train could deliver more reliable journeys and cut congestion.

The government has also announced £1.5 million of funding to establish a Light Rail Safety Standard board to ensure safer journeys for passengers. This will ensure improved management across the UK tram industry by enabling more effective UK-wide cooperation.

[Press release: Mordaunt launches fund to help isolated and marginalised women return to work](#)

- £500,000 will help start up innovative programmes to help marginalised women return to work
- Around 1.8 million women are currently economically inactive because they are caring for their home or family – more than eight times the number of men in that position
- The new fund opens today for organisations and charities across England.

In the UK, around 1.8 million women are currently economically inactive because they are caring for their home or family, this is more than eight times the number of men in that position. Nine out of 10 potential returners to work are women.

The new £500,000 fund, which opens today for organisations around England, follows [Ms Mordaunt's commitment to put marginalised women at the heart of the Government Equalities Office's \(GEO\) work](#), and to [publish a strategy in late spring](#) setting out how government will work to economically empower all women.

Grants will only go to those organisations which can show they have direct relationships with employers who can offer jobs opportunities. They will support parents and carers – men and women – back into the workplace through training, refreshing skills and facilitating work placements.

The funding will support vulnerable people who struggle to return to work, such as:

- Victims of domestic abuse, including economic abuse
- People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- People who speak little to no English
- People with substance abuse support needs
- People with mental or physical health issues
- People who can't access public funds due to their immigration status, but who have the right to work
- Ex-offenders
- People struggling to cope with their economic circumstances
- Women who experience multiple barriers due to their gender and their faith, sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Minister for Women and Equalities Penny Mordaunt said:

“For too long caring responsibilities, language barriers or the terrible impacts of domestic abuse have held many women back from having the freedom, support and choice to do what they want to do.

“I want all these women to be given the chance to reach their full potential, which is why we are investing in them to grow their skills and their confidence, so they feel ready to return to work when they want to.

“By supporting women at all stages of their lives, we are tapping into previously ignored talent, addressing gender inequality in the workplace and helping our economy grow.”

Work and Pensions Secretary Amber Rudd said:

“I welcome the steps set out today and encourage all employers to open their doors to the huge pool of talent out there.

“Last year was a record breaking year for women’s employment with more in work than ever before.

“But for some women, economic empowerment remains the final frontier. Women can never be truly free until they have economic independence and I know there are still women out there who need extra support to help them overcome their personal barriers and find their way into a job they want.”

Studies have shown that time out of work and fewer years of full-time work are two of the reasons women struggle. Analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies found that time out of the labour market has a substantial impact of women’s salaries. On returning to work, women earn around 2% less on average for every year spent out of paid work.

Last year the government guaranteed £1.5 million to get people with caring responsibilities back into work. So far, £489,050 has already been awarded to five organisations, and the remaining £1.01m will be awarded soon.

To ensure the GEO is at the heart of the government’s work on equalities,

last year Ms Mordaunt announced it will [join Cabinet Office from 1 April](#). GEO will work across government and with business and civil society to tackle persistent inequalities that limit economic empowerment at every stage of life.

Notes to editors:

Information on the grant can be found [here](#)

[News story: UK PACT's first project in Colombia will improve energy access](#)

Approximately 3 million people in Colombia have no access to electricity and many live in remote locations unsuitable for connection to the national grid. To address this issue, the Colombian Fund for Non-Conventional Renewable Energies and Efficient Energy Management (FENOGE, under its Spanish acronym) was established with approximately £13m to finance energy access and energy efficiency projects across the country. However, the fund requires support and improved technical capacity to assess and select the necessary projects.

UK PACT (Partnering for Accelerated Climate Transitions) – a £60m International Climate Finance programme at the UK Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy dedicated to providing capacity and capability building for countries eligible for Official Development Assistance – has partnered with the Carbon Trust in Colombia to unlock the FENOGE funds by providing the necessary tools and frameworks to the government's planning agency for energy and mining, UPME. The project will apply cost-effective solutions to promote the efficient management of the available resources.

This collaboration is the first UK PACT project in Colombia. The assistance from the UK Government will directly help FENOGE spend its 2019 funding allocation by the December deadline.

The British Ambassador to Colombia, Dr. Peter Tibber, explained:

This first project of UK PACT in Colombia will support the improving provision of energy access whilst reducing greenhouse gas emissions, by ensuring that critical projects to bring sustainable energy to Colombia's remote regions can go ahead.

About BEIS' International Climate Finance

BEIS' International Climate Finance is a UK Government commitment to support developing countries to respond to the challenges and opportunities of

climate change. As part of this commitment, BEIS is providing at least £5.8bn of ICF between 2016-2020, aiming for an even split between mitigation and adaptation. This places the UK amongst the world's leading providers of climate finance.

The focus is on:

- Building the resilience of the poorest people and communities
- Ensuring that the vast expansion in infrastructure in developing countries is low-carbon
- Halting deforestation

About BEIS' UK PACT

BEIS's UK PACT programme forms part of the UK's £5.8bn commitment to international climate finance by 2021, as part of the global effort to tackle climate change.