

Press release: Mel Stride: British productions deserve our support

Thousands of productions – including the widely-anticipated series five of Idris Elba’s hit BBC One drama – have benefitted from the government’s creative industry tax relief.

The British Film Institute said this support is playing a vital role enabling the industry to work on the global stage, while generating thousands of jobs.

Treasury Minister Mel Stride said the booming UK industry is now giving Hollywood and Bollywood a run for their money.

In the last year, almost 300 films and TV shows and a further 2,000 theatre productions, including festive pantomimes, claimed tax relief.

Britain’s world-leading creative industries benefited from over £850 million of support through this HM Treasury scheme in the last year. Since its introduction, 2,420 films, 530 TV productions and 480 videogames have benefited from the tax reliefs.

As such, families sitting down together this Christmas most likely enjoyed a production made possible because of this. These included:

- festive treats such as the Dr Who Christmas special and Snowman
- gripping dramas like Luther and Bodyguard
- family-friendly favourites including the Jungle Book and Mary Poppins Returns

Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Mel Stride MP, said:

Original British productions deserve our support. They not only make a valuable cultural contribution to the UK, they are also a crucial part of our economy.

Thanks to your support our industry has gone from strength to strength and is giving Hollywood and Bollywood a run for their money.

The TV guides and festive calendars this Christmas are another reminder of our booming creative industries which, with the backing of the Treasury, will continue to grow in 2019.

The Chief Executive of the British Film Institute, Amanda Nevill, said:

The government’s screen sector tax reliefs play a vital role in enabling our film and television industries to work on a global

stage and do what they do best – creating world-class film and television, generating thousands of jobs for talented people working in front of and behind the camera.

UK-made films and television productions are a vibrant part of our storytelling culture, celebrated by audiences at home and abroad and showcase UK creative excellence to the world.

Further Information

- the UK's creative industries made a record contribution to the economy in 2017 growing to over £100bn (compared to £95bn a year earlier)
- creative sector tax reliefs were first introduced 10 years ago to support production companies filming in Britain
- in 2013, the scheme was expanded to include high-end TV, video games and theatre (which includes pantomimes)
- once a TV or film company meets the qualifying criteria, it allows producers to claim a significant rebate on a large part of its expenditure
- to be eligible for the film, high-end TV, animation, video games or children's TV tax relief, a production must be culturally British
- productions are assessed by a "cultural test" or co-production treaties administered by the British Film Institute
- last year, some 180 UK films, 90 TV shows and over 2,000 theatre productions claimed this tax relief
- in total, over £850m was paid out to the creative sector through the scheme during 2017-18
- several well-known productions on the TV guide and in cinema this Christmas have claimed creative sector tax relief. Notably: Avengers: Infinity War, Bodyguard, Dr Who, Holmes and Watson, Killing Eve, Paddington, Ready Player One, Snowman and the Snowdog, Star Wars: The Force Awakens, The Jungle Book, The Inbetweeners Movie, and Watership Down
- creative Tax Relief is available for: films, high end TV, animation programmes, video games, children's TV, orchestras, theatre productions,

and museum and gallery exhibitions

[Press release: PM: 2019 will start a new chapter for Britain](#)



[PM Theresa May New Year message](#)

In a video message to the country on New Year's Day, Prime Minister Theresa May said:

New Year is a time to look ahead and in 2019 the UK will start a new chapter. The Brexit deal I have negotiated delivers on the vote of the British people and in the next few weeks MPs will have an important decision to make. If Parliament backs a deal, Britain can turn a corner.

The referendum in 2016 was divisive but we all want the best for our country and 2019 can be the year we put our differences aside and move forward together, into a strong new relationship with our European neighbours and out into the world as a globally trading nation.

The PM will also say that while Brexit is important, there are other significant issues to focus on, reflecting on the achievements of 2018 and looking ahead with optimism.

She said:

Important though Brexit is, it is not the only issue that counts. When each of us looks back on 2019, it will be the personal milestones that stand out. These are the things that matter most and by agreeing a good Brexit deal, we can focus our energy on those things – strengthening our economy and opening up new markets

for our businesses to create new jobs and opportunities across the UK; building the housing our country needs so everyone can have a home of their own and transforming technical education so everyone gains the skills they need to get on. Our long term plan for the NHS will put a record investment into our most precious public service so it is there for us when we need it. We will introduce a new skills based immigration system to replace freedom of movement, and by protecting and enhancing our natural environment, we will make Britain a healthier place.

This year the UK has achieved a lot. The employment rate is at a record high, our debt is starting its first sustained fall in a generation and the number of people in absolute poverty is at a record low. But a New Year means new potential to do even more, to ensure that everyone in every community can feel the benefit. Together I believe we can start a new chapter with optimism and hope. We have all we need to thrive and if we come together in 2019 I know we can make a success of what lies ahead and build a country that truly works for every one of us.

Published 31 December 2018

Press release: Home Secretary bolsters Border Force fleet in the Channel

Two Border Force cutters, currently operating abroad, are to be brought back to the UK to help patrol the Channel, the Home Secretary Sajid Javid announced today.

The move comes in response to growing concerns that the increase in attempts by migrants to cross the Channel in small boats over recent weeks could lead to the loss of life.

The Home Secretary announced the decision after chairing a cross-agency meeting including Border Force and National Crime Agency.

The addition of two further cutters significantly strengthens Border Force capability and resilience in the Channel. However, the Home Secretary stressed that the key to addressing the issue lay in close cooperation with the French and continuing work upstream to prevent migrants travelling and to disrupt organised criminals.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

As Home Secretary I have a duty to protect the UK border as well as a duty to protect human life. Anyone crossing the Channel – one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world – is taking a huge risk with their life. Whatever your motivations are, no one wants to see a tragedy. We have already seen children as young as 9 on these boats.

That is one of the reasons I have taken the decision to redeploy two Border Force vessels – known as cutters – which are currently based abroad to the UK. They will be on hand to help patrol the Channel alongside a Border Force cutter and two smaller coastal patrol vessels currently stationed there.

My role is also about protecting the UK border. Patrol boats have a role to play but there is no single solution to this complex issue and it requires action on many fronts. We need to continue to work closely with the National Crime Agency and French counterparts to target the organised crime gangs behind these dangerous attempts and stop boats before they leave French waters – as well as working upstream to prevent migrants making these perilous journeys in the first place.

Yesterday I spoke to my French counterpart Christophe Castaner and we agreed an advanced action plan which includes stepping up patrols and increasing surveillance. We plan to meet in the coming weeks to ensure we are doing all we can to tackle the issue.

Border Force has five cutters and six coastal patrol vessels (CPVs) and their deployment is kept under constant review. Three Coastal Patrol Vessels and one cutter, HMC Vigilant, are currently deployed in the Channel. Two cutters, HMC Valiant and Protector, are in the Mediterranean. HMC Seeker is in Gibraltar while HMC Searcher remains in UK waters. The UK will continue its commitment to the FRONTEX humanitarian mission by retaining a cutter in the Med.

This year 539 migrants have attempted to travel to the UK on small boats. Of these, 434 (around 80%) made their attempts in the last three months of the year (since October 1). Of the 539, 227 (42%) were intercepted by the French before they made it to the UK.

[News story: Crime news: start of amended Advocates' Graduated Fee](#)

Scheme

Important amendments have been made to the Advocates' Graduated Fee Scheme (AGFS) which come into force on 31 December 2018.

The changes under scheme 11 apply to all Crown Court cases falling under the AGFS with a representation order granted on or after 31 December 2018.

What are the changes?

The changes include moving around 40 offences to different bandings, re-introducing the 'very unusual' criteria to 'special preparation' and fee increases as follows:

- basic fees for trials, guilty pleas and cracked trials in sexual offences involving children, dishonesty cases, drugs cases, and a range of other offences
- daily attendance fees and basic fees for trials, guilty pleas and cracked trials in standard cases
- fees for ineffective trials, appeals against sentence and conviction, and elected cases not proceeded
- all other fees by 1%

These changes were outlined in the government's response to the consultation paper, which was published on 10 December:

[Amending the Advocates' Graduated Fee Scheme](#)

How to claim

From 31 December, providers should claim online in the usual way, via Claim for Crown Court Defence (CCD):

[Claim for Crown Court defence](#)

Guidance

We have also updated our guidance documentation and fee calculators. These should be used for cases with a representation order dated on or after 31 December 2018:

[Crown Court fee guidance](#)

[Graduated Fee Calculators](#)

We will continue to engage with the representative bodies to improve our guidance where possible. Any updates will be published on the Crown Court fee guidance page.

Use latest 'Banding of Offences' document

The updated 'Banding of Offences' document for scheme 11 will help you in the claiming process.

This has been published by the Ministry of Justice and will allow you to check that cases are being claimed under the correct band of offence for scheme 10 and scheme 11. It is available here:

[Banding of offences in the Advocates' Graduated Fee Scheme](#)

When selecting a file to download you should note that version 1.1 relates to scheme 10 and version 1.2 relates to scheme 11.

Ancillary hearings

Some ancillary hearings and the second day of trial were 'unbundled' from the basic fee under both scheme 10 and scheme 11 when compared to scheme 9.

Advocates should make sure that they claim for these hearings where they are applicable.

Further information

advocates-fee@justice.gov.uk: AGFS claim enquiries

servicedevelopment@justice.gov.uk: enquiries about guidance, FAQs or calculators

crowncourtdefence@digital.justice.gov.uk: general enquiries only – for specific enquiries about claiming in CCD users should use the feedback link within the service

[Advocates' Graduated Fee Scheme claims](#): to download 'special preparation' forms and paper contingency forms

[Criminal Legal Aid \(Remuneration\) \(Amendment No.2\) Regulations 2018](#): updated regulations laid on 10 December 2018

[Press release: 'Strictly', vampires](#)

and sausages – 2018's oddest requests from Brits abroad

The FCO has released details of some of the oddest enquiries it received in 2018, to highlight what it can and cannot do to help Brits in trouble abroad.

Ten of the more unusual enquiries received included:

1. A caller in the USA asking which contestant had been voted off Strictly Come Dancing the previous night.
2. A man asking where he should send a 5-foot piece of wood that he'd found on a beach that he thought may be from a British warship from the 1700s.
3. A caller in the Netherlands who had just watched Braveheart and had some questions about the plot.
4. A person in Italy asking the embassy to help arrange their wedding, recommend a florist and get them tickets to see the Pope.
5. A caller in the Canary Islands requesting that we persuade his hotel to give him a different room as a stray cat had "broken into" his existing one and peed on his bed.
6. A man enquiring if there were vampires in Poland because a woman he met online asked what blood type he was before they met for their first date.
7. A man in New Delhi asking what time the British High Commission opened, as he'd heard we sold vegetarian sausages and wanted to buy some.
8. A man in Kuwait asking if any of our staff wanted to adopt his puppies.
9. A caller asking if we could provide a list of women in Argentina who he might be able to marry.
10. A man requesting we speak to massage parlour in Bangkok on his behalf, as he fell asleep during a massage and felt he shouldn't have to pay for it.

While the FCO can't help with the types of problems listed above, we can help British people in trouble while they're abroad in a number of ways, including:

- Getting in touch with family or friends for you if you can't contact them yourself;
- Providing details of local services like lawyers, interpreters and doctors;
- Offering information on how to transfer money if you need to make payments;
- Issuing emergency travel documents;
- Visiting people in hospital or who have been imprisoned.

So far in 2018*, the FCO has received more than 330,000 calls from British people who needed our help. This included more than 3,400 people who had been hospitalised and 4,900 who had been arrested. We issued more than 29,600 emergency travel documents to help people who had lost their passports make onward journeys.

The work of the FC0's consular staff was also featured on [Inside the Foreign Office](#) which aired on BBC 2 in November.

An FC0 spokesman said:

I can regretfully confirm that the Foreign Office isn't able to offer advice on vampires, rogue stray cats or 'Strictly' contestants. And our capacity to deploy veggie sausages remains sadly lacking.

But in all seriousness, getting into trouble abroad can be daunting and upsetting. If you find yourself in an emergency in another country, contact the nearest British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate and our consular staff will do everything they can to help.

- If you are in the UK and worried about someone overseas, you can call the FC0 in London on 020 7008 1500.
- If you are a British person who is overseas and needs help, you should call the nearest British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate: Contact details are here: [contact details](#).
- *Figures are from January – November 2018 (inclusive).
- We recommend people read our travel advice before going abroad. It is available here: [FC0 Travel Advice](#).

Further information