

# News story: Secretary of State confirms MLA pay reduced by 1 November 2018

As she announced in the House of Commons on 6 September, the Secretary of State has accepted the recommendations made by Sir Trevor Reaney in December 2017 and will cut MLAs' pay by 27.5% over the next few months, unless a Northern Ireland Executive is formed in the meantime.

The Secretary of State said:

My absolute priority, and the priority of the UK Government, is to restore devolved government at the earliest opportunity. I recognise that MLAs still carry out important work, but it can't be right that they continue to receive their full salary until the Executive and the Assembly are restored.

I am acting today in line with the powers voted for by Parliament to cut their pay until the Executive is restored. This will be followed by legislation to give clarity to the Northern Ireland Civil Service for the decisions they can make, and my focus on establishing talks between the parties.

I am confident that the plan I set out in Parliament provides the right framework to work with the parties to restore an Executive so that important decisions for the people of Northern Ireland can be made by locally elected politicians.

The pay of staff working for MLAs will not be affected.

The letter from the Secretary of State to MLAs informs them that their salary will be cut by 15% from 1 November, and by a further 12.5% from 1 January 2019 if an Executive has not been restored. Travel allowances have also been reduced, and inflationary pay rises cancelled while there is no Executive to determine otherwise.

Should an Executive be restored, under legislation passed in Westminster in July full salaries will be restored and the power to vary MLA salaries will return from the Secretary of State to a panel appointed by the Assembly.

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# Press release: Environment Agency joins forces with eBay to stop illegal vehicle breakers

The partnership will also act to better inform the public who may unknowingly purchase parts from illegal traders. Business sellers who list used vehicle parts now receive a pop up message to highlight that an environmental permit is needed to break vehicles and directs them to [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) where they can get further information.

Sellers on eBay are also being advised to display their permit number, or the name of the sites where they source the parts they are selling, which provides reassurance to purchasers that they are buying from a legal dealer.

The Environment Agency are directly contacting eBay traders who are not displaying their environmental credentials, providing guidance and warning them about undertaking non permitted breaking activities.

Those intentionally operating illegally and not responding to the Environment Agency will find their trading account suspended or removed from eBay.

It has been discovered that some car breakers and traders are not aware of the need to have a permit. They are also unaware of how to properly dismantle a vehicle, dispose of the hazardous waste, deal with fire risks and subsequent risk to the environment.

The new partnership has resulted in an increase in applications for permits to take their business into legal status. The Environment Agency has also benefited from being able to utilise resources and time in tackling illegal car breaking.

Rich Cloke from the Environment Agency said:

Businesses are not always aware they should have a permit and many are reacting positively to the messages we are getting to them. We have seen an increase in businesses subsequently applying for the relevant permit.

This is proving to be a quick and effective way of communicating our message directly with vehicle breakers and parts dealers.

With sellers who continue to trade, the Environment Agency will take further steps including reporting them to the Police and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and making a site visit.

The partnership will also aim to inform the general public who may unknowingly purchase used parts from illegal businesses.

A spokesperson for eBay commenting on working with the Environment Agency said:

eBay's contribution to supporting the Environment Agency compliance efforts on the sale of vehicle parts sourced from illegal End of life Vehicle (ELV) breakers has significantly increased the level of compliance from business sellers on eBay UK website.

This successful cooperation leads the industry and sets an example of effective collaboration between the private sector and the Environment Agency, rarely seen both offline and online.

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## **Press release: New competition: 'Don't Blow It! Safely eliminating munitions on the battlefield'**

The Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) is launching a new competition aimed at the private sector and academia, to seek innovative solutions and approaches to accessing, disabling and/or irreversibly destroying chemical and biological weapons munitions, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and bulk agents on the battlefield.

The competition is aimed at non-traditional defence and security innovators. DASA will be particularly interested to hear from those in allied technology areas such as the oil and gas, mining sectors as well as those which have experience in handling hazardous materials.

With an initial £500,000 to fund multiple proof-of-concept proposals at low Technology Readiness Levels (TRL), it is anticipated that an additional funding of £1.5 million may be available depending on the outcome of the initial funding phase.

It is jointly funded by the UK Ministry of Defence and the US Department of Defense, and will operate under an existing memorandum of understanding between both nations.

The competition was formally launched at an event in London on 26 September 2018.

Registration for this event has now closed, however, if you wish to attend please email [accelerator@dstl.gov.uk](mailto:accelerator@dstl.gov.uk) and we will endeavor to add you to the delegates list for the day. Places are limited and we reserve the right to limit attendance if needed. If you are accepted to attend the event, you will be sent full details and an agenda.

Details about the competition can be found [here](#)

Any queries regarding this competition, should be sent to [accelerator@dstl.gov.uk](mailto:accelerator@dstl.gov.uk).

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## **News story: Minister for Africa announces vital funding for LGBT inclusion**

Last year, the UK government carried out a survey of LGBT people in the UK, to gather accurate and comprehensive data about their experiences and the challenges they face.

The response was unprecedented – over 100,000 people took part, making it the world's largest ever national survey of LGBT and intersex people. As a result, the government has stepped up its efforts against LGBT hate crime. The reporting and recording of hate incidents has improved as well as the police response rate to these.

Although the UK leads the way in much of its LGBT legislation and policies, there is still more to do. At the Commonwealth Summit earlier this year, the Prime Minister Theresa May, expressed her deep regret for the UK's past role in introducing laws in Commonwealth nations which criminalised same-sex relations, and for the legacy of discrimination and violence that persists today.

To continue addressing these historic wrongs, and to drive positive change, [Minister Baldwin](#) pledged that the UK government would invest more support through UK Aid Connect, to promote global LGBT inclusion .

Speaking at the Violence against LGBTI Individuals UNGA event, Minister Harriett Baldwin said:

We have all come together as nations with a shared vision of a better future for LGBTI people everywhere.

Through this vital UK Aid Connect funding, the government will work with LGBT groups, research institutions, human rights defenders and think tanks to:

- strengthen LGBT communities;
- increase the economic inclusion of LGBT people;
- reduce violence against them; and
- instil respect for their human rights and personal wellbeing.

Step-by-step, the UK government is committed to working with international partners to make the world a safer and better place.

The UK government will invest £12million through UK Aid Connect to promote global LGBT inclusion.

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## **Press release: Schoolboy super-fan meets stars of his favourite show**

Jack Ryding, who is 12 and lives near York, is an avid viewer of the BBC documentary A1: Britain's Longest Road which features Highways England traffic officers helping people on the A1.

Traffic officers who patrol the A1 organised the visit to the regional headquarters in Wakefield for Jack and his friend Freddie Marshall (12) to let them see for themselves what really goes on behind the scenes.

Series 3 of the show – which is currently airing on BBC1 at 11am and attracts around 1.5 million viewers per episode – focuses on the people working round the clock on Britain's longest and most iconic road.

Alongside traffic officers the series also features maintenance teams from across Highways England who keep the road running.

Jack said:

I really love watching the documentary and coming to the North East control centre and meeting the team involved has been a great experience.

I loved being in the traffic officer vehicle and sounding the bullhorn and meeting the staff in the control room to look at what really goes on behind the scenes.

Jack got to sit in the traffic officer vehicle, visit the control room and chat to the camera operators.

He also got a miniature traffic officer vehicle to take home as a souvenir of the day.

Highways England regional director Richard Marshall said:

The series has really captured the imagination of millions of BBC viewers of all ages, but at just 12 years old, Jack must be one of our youngest fans.

Like so many other viewers, I am delighted that Jack is enjoying the programmes and appreciating the fantastic work which Highways England traffic officers and the rest of the team play in keeping the A1 safe on a daily basis.

The series is airing each day on BBC1 at 11am and will be on until Friday 12 October.

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.