

News story: First MoT test to remain at 3 years to protect road safety

Ministers put road safety first as they today (18 January 2017) decided to maintain the period before a car's first MoT test at 3 years.

The move comes after a Department for Transport [consultation last year to consider changing the wait before the first test to 4 years](#).

Most of those responding to the consultation were against the proposals on safety grounds, arguing that the savings to motorists were outweighed by the risk to road users and the test often highlights upcoming issues affecting the vehicle. A public survey for DfT by Populus also showed fewer than half of people were in favour of the change.

Roads Minister Jesse Norman said:

We have some of the safest roads in the world, and are always looking at ways of making them safer.

Although modern cars are better built and safer than when the MoT test was last changed 50 years ago, there has been a clear public concern that any further changes don't put people's lives at risk.

We are looking at further research to ensure the MoT test evolves with the demands of modern motoring.

By law, all vehicles must be roadworthy, regardless of whether they have passed an MoT, and the content of the tests will not be changed.

The test was introduced in 1960, requiring vehicles to undergo a first check after 10 years. It was changed in 1967 to 3 years.

In 2016 (the most recent figures available), more than 2.4 million cars had their first MoT test, which costs owners a maximum of £54.85. The pass rate was about 85% and the most common reasons for failure include lighting, tyres and braking faults.

Changing the time period until the first test would have saved motorists more than £100 million a year.

Press release: Government sets out minimum wage rights for seafarers in UK water

- seafarers in UK internal waters must be paid at least the minimum wage, government warns
- UK Border Force will hand out information in over 50 languages promoting seafarers' workers' rights
- new Business Minister affirms workers playing a 'vital' role in UK waters should be paid fairly

All seafarers working in UK waters must be paid at least minimum wage rates, the government warned in new [guidance](#) published today (18 January 2018).

It comes after concerns about unfair competition, following reports that some ships registered abroad were underpaying their workers in UK waters, undercutting UK crews.

UK Border Force patrols will be handing out information to seafarers and employers in more than 50 languages promoting minimum wage law.

Employers failing to pay at least National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage can face fines of up to 200% of the underpayment, public naming and, for the worst offences, criminal prosecution.

Business Minister Andrew Griffiths said:

Seafarers' work is vital to key UK industries such as fishing, oil and gas. We are determined to ensure they are paid fairly for the work they do, often in challenging conditions.

Today we are making it crystal clear that if you work in UK waters you are entitled to at least the minimum wage and all employers – no matter where they're from – must pay it.

Border Force's Modern Slavery Maritime lead Rob Meyer said:

Border Force takes its role of tackling exploitation and protecting vulnerable people very seriously. We have run a number of maritime operations targeting unscrupulous employers in the sector, and are working with government enforcement agencies to take action taken against the minority of employers who do not treat their workers in line with UK law.

Minimum wage law applies to seafarers:

- when they are working on ships within UK waters and ports regardless of where the ship is registered, or where the worker ordinarily works or lives
- on a foreign ship for work performed outside the UK if they ordinarily work in the UK
- on UK registered ships if some of their work is in the UK and they live in the UK

If anyone is concerned that they are not receiving at least the minimum wage, they can [check their pay online](#), or contact [Acas](#) in confidence, on 0300 123 1100.

[News story: UK to step up French operations in Africa as PM and President Macron meet for UK-France Summit](#)

The Prime Minister is expected to make the announcement as part of the UK-France Summit at The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, where she will discuss the UK's strong and wide-ranging bilateral relationship with President Macron.

The helicopters, which will provide logistic support to French troops, are part of a wider effort to increase stability in the Sahel region of Africa in order to tackle Islamist terrorism.

UK and French efforts in the region aim to provide greater stability, reducing the global terrorist threat and stemming the flow of illegal migration to Europe.

The UK has been a long-standing supporter of UN, EU and African Union military operations in Mali and has worked with international partners to prevent extremists from using the ungoverned space in the Sahel to plan and launch attacks on Europe, as well as counter the illegal trade in people, drugs, weapons and wildlife.

This is in addition to existing wider support to Africa including doubling our UN peacekeeping contribution with additional deployments to South Sudan and Somalia. Today the UK and France also agreed to work together to ensure EU African Peace Facility funding for AMISOM in Somalia.

The deployment of Chinooks to Mali will increase British support to France's Operation BARKHANE, in addition to strategic air transport flights already

being carried out by the RAF.

British military personnel will not be involved in combat operations, but the deployment of Chinooks will provide a niche capability providing logistical support but also saving lives by avoiding the need to move troops by ground where they are more vulnerable to attack.

Alongside the military contribution, DfID will allocate £50m of additional aid including lifesaving humanitarian support for hundreds of thousands of people affected by epidemics, natural disasters and conflict across Mali, Niger, Chad, North Cameroon, Burkina Faso and Mauritania.

This will provide 320,000 people with emergency food and nutrition support and provide protection for 255,000 internally displaced people, returnees, refugees and their host communities. It will also supply clean water and better sanitation for 150,000 people.

The FCO is also exploring ways to better support the UK national interest in the region by enhancing the UK diplomatic presence.

In addition, the Home Office will work with key African partners to build their capability to tackle human trafficking in support of the UK's migration and modern slavery agenda. Discussions on taking this work forward will take place with the French after the Summit.

France has also agreed to commit troops to the UK-led NATO battlegroup in Estonia in 2019, building on the successful joint deployment which the Prime Minister and President Macron visited together last year. These personnel will make up part of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in Eastern Europe, providing deterrence in the face of increasing Russian assertiveness.

This further deployment of UK and French forces alongside our Estonian allies represents both the UK and France's shared commitment to upholding the deterrence and defence posture of NATO, and more widely our firm resolve and commitment to European security.

Today's Summit, which will be attended by UK Cabinet Ministers and their counterparts, will mark President Macron's first visit to the UK as President.

While Summits in previous years have focussed on defence and security, foreign policy and nuclear energy, the 2018 Summit will be broadened to cover the full spectrum of the UK-France bilateral relationship including prosperity, innovation, science and education.

Hundreds of thousands of British citizens live in France while hundreds of thousands of French nationals have chosen to make the UK their home. And the two countries share £71 billion in trade, making France the UK's third largest trading partner.

The Summit today will reflect the broadness of the UK-France relationship, with wide-ranging discussions also expected to focus on how the two countries can work together to address the challenges and seize the opportunities

presented by new technologies.

Ministers will also discuss ways in which the existing deep linguistic and cultural ties between the UK and France can be strengthened through pupil exchanges and shared education and cultural initiatives.

As well as attending the Summit the Prime Minister and President are expected to have a private lunch and attend a reception at the Victoria and Albert Museum in the evening.

The Prime Minister said:

Today's Summit will underline that we remain committed to defending our people and upholding our values as liberal democracies in the face of any threat, whether at home or abroad.

But our friendship has always gone far beyond defence and security and the scope of today's discussions represents its broad and unique nature.

And while this Summit takes place as the UK prepares to leave the EU, this does not mean that the UK is leaving Europe.

What is clear from the discussions we will have today is that a strong relationship between our two countries is in the UK, France and Europe's interests, both now and into the future.

[Speech: New Towns: launch of the All-Party Parliamentary Group](#)

Good evening and thank you, Lucy. It's a pleasure to be here.

Now, we all know the jokes about roundabouts, concrete wastelands and ring roads.

The references to eternity looking like Milton Keynes.

The people who make these jokes have no idea what they're talking about.

If they want to know what eternity feels like, try being a politician waiting for the call from No.10 on reshuffle day!

But, seriously, as the launch of this APPG shows, New Towns have got a lot to offer.

That we need to do more to ensure they're fit for the future.

And that we have an ambitious vision for the New Towns of the 21st century.

One man who certainly wasn't lacking in vision was Ebenezer Howard, the pioneer whose garden cities inspired the New Towns.

But it's fair to say that not everyone bought into his dreams of marrying the best of city and rural living.

Even the progressive Fabian News said rather sniffily:

"His plans would have been in time if they had been submitted to the Romans when they conquered Britain...

But Ebenezer Howard's achievements; as an urban planner whose influence can still be felt, here and abroad, speak for themselves.

They're all the more remarkable considering that his day job was as a Hansard short-hand copy-taker right here in Parliament.

So maybe I need to look a little closer to home for solutions to the housing crisis!

And it's especially pleasing to have the Town and Country Planning Association...

...the organisation Howard founded...

...supporting this APPG and represented here today.

Your input, and the history behind it, underlines that the challenges Howard sought to address are just as relevant today.

Not enough good quality affordable housing.

Overcrowding.

The belief that everyone deserves to live in a strong, vibrant community.

Of course, the bleak industrial backdrop that spawned Howard's garden cities has long gone.

But the desire for people to live somewhere they can find work, build families, get about easily, and enjoy green space has not.

It's the most basic of desires – the desire for a place to call home.

And it's this issue of place...

...how to build not just more homes, but strong communities...

...that goes to the heart of the challenge we face as a country.

A challenge we're determined to meet – as underlined by the recent change in my department's name...

...to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

And the launch of a new national housing agency, Homes England.

A challenge that the important work of this APPG has an opportunity to inform.

Because there's little doubt that there are valuable lessons to be learned from New Towns.

Many, like those represented by my honourable friends here today,...

... are home to successful companies

...offer affordable homes

...and job opportunities that attract inward commuters.

But the downsides of the rapid development and, in particular, centralised planning, that underpinned New Towns are all too evident.

Dated, often identikit housing, infrastructure and town centres that, too often, look like everywhere and nowhere.

That don't just make these towns the butt of lazy jokes...

...but make it harder for them to be seen as truly aspirational and attract the investment they need to grow and thrive.

Like you, I want this to change.

And I can see that many new towns are stepping up to the challenge.

Some, like Bracknell, are making intelligent use of their existing assets...

...and making a virtue of the need for massive regeneration to offer investors and developers scale of opportunity.

Others, such as Crawley, are introducing a richer mix of shopping opportunities and development...

...by breaking down the original blocky zoning and the inner ring roads.

And we're seeing high quality and better design informing the development of Lightmoor Village in Telford.

A development that, fittingly, is being driven by a partnership between Homes England and Bournville...

...one of the first and still most successful New Towns.

And I see partnerships; between central and local government, between local government and the private sector, as very much the way forward.

For regenerating existing New Towns and driving the delivery of new ones.

Again, Lucy's constituency, is showing just what's possible through initiatives such as the Telford Land Deal.

A partnership between:

- the government
- Homes England
- the local council
- and Marches LEP

...that will deliver 2,800 new homes and 8,500 new jobs.

The key thing with this Deal, is that it's led, not centrally, miles away from the communities concerned...

...even if that approach had worked previously, it wouldn't be right for the times we live in.

Instead, it's led locally by those who know Telford best – the people who live and work there.

This shows that government and New Towns can work innovatively to power further growth.

And that we're open to other New Towns coming to us with ideas.

We're already supporting 24 locally led garden cities, towns and villages...

...ranging in size from 1,500 new homes to over 20,000, from Cornwall to Cumbria.

Some are being built on land where there are few or no houses at the moment.

Others will provide transformational growth to existing settlements.

All reflect their particular local circumstances and share a focus on quality and good design...

...echoing the commitments in our [Housing White Paper](#).

The recent Budget...

...the biggest and boldest for housing for decades...

...built on these commitments to back five new locally led Garden Towns in places where demand is high.

A million new homes in the Oxford-Milton Keynes-Cambridge corridor by 2050...

...a hugely ambitious project which I was delighted to appoint my honourable friend, Iain Stewart, to champion.

And also the first of our ambitious Housing Deals...

...with Oxfordshire, to deliver 100,000 homes by 2031, backed by £215 million of funding for infrastructure.

We all know that the right infrastructure is absolutely vital for New Towns.

So the Budget's doubling of investment in the Housing Infrastructure Fund to £5 billion can only be good news.

As are our legislative changes to reboot New Town Development Corporations – the vehicle for the post-war New Towns.

So you can count on our support.

But I won't pretend that we have all the answers.

Which is why I am keen to learn from the important work you'll be undertaking; to better understand the challenges and opportunities for New Towns.

To consider how can we do more to support the people and places you serve.

And deliver the next wave of garden towns and villages.

So congratulations again on today's launch and all the best for your work ahead.

As a government, we've made some great strides, having delivered more than a million homes since 2010.

And helped over 255,000 households buy their own home through Help to Buy.

But there's clearly a long way to go to deliver the 300,000 homes a year on average we will need by the mid 2020s.

New towns have an important role to play in helping us fix our broken housing market.

But I know we'll really have succeeded when the joke isn't on New Towns, but those who knock them.

Thank you.

Speech: Matt Hancock's speech at the Alliance for Intellectual Property reception

As new Secretary of State, I wanted to set out my views on intellectual property early and clearly.

Imagine there was no James Bond

Imagine there was no Harry Potter

Imagine there was no Imagine.. by John Lennon

Who can say what cultural brilliance would have been robbed from our nation if artists couldn't reap the rewards of their creation?

As your report acknowledges, we have one of the best intellectual property regimes in the world.

We were one of the first countries in the world to realise the need for laws to protect the work of creators. The Statute of Anne from 1710 is widely seen as the first copyright act, and influenced similar legislation across the world.

Of course a lot has changed since then.

Rather than copyright simply concerning what comes off the printing press, there are now international video and streaming platforms which host colossal amounts of content. Four hundred hours of video is uploaded to YouTube every minute.

Of course the internet means distribution is easier than ever. Both legal and illegal.

And the viral nature of social media means ownership can be harder than ever to enforce.

To paraphrase Mark Twain, a stolen joke is no laughing matter.

You understand this. IP rules may be technical but their importance can't be overstated.

Intellectual property is vital to encouraging creativity and as a Government we are committed to protecting it.

We remain fully committed to addressing the transfer of value from the creative industries and closing the value gap that fails to reward our creators.

We are making some real progress in this area. Research shows there has been a drop in infringement levels from 17% to 15% since 2013, partly due to the increased availability of legal content.

But there is much more to do. The research also shows that pirates are increasingly turning to illegal streaming devices and websites. You have told me this.

This must be stopped and there is a lot of work taking place to do this.

Our Digital Charter is the framework which will develop the policies and frameworks to make the UK the safest and fairest place to be online. We have a good track record on this.

The Government has helped to broker a ground-breaking code of practice through the Search Roundtable.

This helped search engines and the creative industries to work together so consumers aren't being led to copyright infringing websites.

Thank you to the Alliance and its members for the vital part you all played in this. These partnerships between tech firms and the creative industries are crucial and we want to see even more of them.

The Government has also confirmed that it will continue to fund the Intellectual Property Crime Unit, helping it to build on its impressive record fighting online counterfeiting and piracy.

While we remain members of the EU, we will support work in Brussels to tackle the value gap.

And as we leave the EU we will import EU rules into UK law and then maintain and strengthen the protection of intellectual property.

We want to go further than just maintaining the status quo.

Brexit will provide the opportunity to strike trade deals independently with new markets.

And I want to make it perfectly clear tonight; intellectual property will be at the heart of these discussions.

The Government wants Free Trade Agreements to support innovation, market entry and consumer choice.

And as we look to expand the potential of new markets, we want to ensure rewards for creators, along with support and investment for the creative industries.

Breaches of IP are not a new concern for artists; Jimi Hendrix once said "I've been imitated so well that I've heard people copy my mistakes." This is true for me too...

But the scope and the nature of it is changing and we need to be well equipped to combat it.

Britain has historically been world-leading in helping artists get the value they deserve from their books, plays, films or music.

The Alliance for IP has played a big part in this. Thank you for all the work you've been doing on behalf of artists across the UK – and for producing this valuable report.

It is my profound belief that throughout history, civilised society has been based on the respect of property.

That is the basis of any market economy. And the market economy in turn is the greatest force for prosperity ever invented by man.

And as technology marches on, the property that really matters is increasingly the ideas, the designs, the art and the concepts. In short, the IP.

It is therefore no exaggeration to say that respect for IP underpins this nation's prosperity. And you are its most effective voices and guardians. Britain understood this first. And we will lead the world once more.

Our commitment to IP is unwavering. We will remain an open, confident, forward looking nation that will be a haven for the brightest creative talent. For that is where this country's future lies.

Thank you and have a wonderful evening.