

[News story: Government Chemist hosts international food allergy meeting](#)

The Government Chemist hosted a meeting of the University of Manchester Food Allergy Network, MFAN, at LGC on 11 April 2017. The meeting attracted 27 delegates from very relevant organisations in the allergen research and management areas. Chaired by Professor Clare Mills, MFAN coordinates research on the risk management of food allergens with input from the analytical and food industry, academics, regulators and retailers. Attendees from the UK, Europe and Australia were joined electronically by researchers from the University of Nebraska and the US Food and Drug Administration.

The group discussed international research carried out to assess the performance of immunoassay and mass spectrometry techniques in detecting and measuring food allergens. Allergenic compounds can provoke life threatening reactions even when present in food at very low levels. Therefore it is very important to establish whether allergens can be detected accurately and reliably. This work is vital to protect the health of consumers with allergies, improve food labelling and reduce food recalls that impact on the balance sheets and reputations of food companies.

MFAN meeting attendees at work

The group agreed on findings that will be published in scientific peer-reviewed literature later in 2017 and decided on the priorities of a programme of future innovative work.

Dr Michael Walker, Nominated Officer, Government Chemist team, commented on the value of this meeting:

Allergen risk management is both scientifically challenging and important from many different perspectives. By facilitating this international event organised by Prof Clare Mills the Government Chemist is supporting progress in allergen measurement research and therefore better placed to respond to current and future allergen related referee cases.

For any enquiries, contact the Government Chemist team.

[News story: Government shareholding in](#)

Lloyds Banking Group

Lloyds Banking Group has been fully returned to private ownership.

The trading plan announced in October 2016 has ended following the final sale of the government's shares in Lloyds Banking Group (Lloyds). As a result, Lloyds have informed the market this morning (17 May 2017) that the government is no longer a shareholder in the bank.

The government acquired a 43% shareholding in Lloyds in 2009 following a £20.3 billion intervention in the bank. Shares were sold through accelerated bookbuilds (ABBs) in September 2013 and March 2014. ABBs involve selling a large block of shares to institutional investors overnight.

Additional shares were sold through two trading plans which ran from December 2014 to June 2016, and from October 2016 to May 2017. A trading plan involves drip-feeding shares into the market on a daily basis, over an extended period of time. In addition, the government has also received dividend payments in relation to its shareholding.

Speech: "These sessions do not reflect Kosovo as it is, but Kosovo as it was."

Thank you Mr President and thank you Special Representative Tanin for your briefing.

Let me join others in welcoming Ambassador Citaku and Minister Kuburović to the Council.

It's been less than three months since this Council met to discuss the situation in Kosovo. As the Secretary-General's report makes clear, it has been a comparatively quiet period; one that doesn't warrant this Council's attention so soon after our last session.

This period of calm is welcome; a de-escalation in tension between Kosovo and Serbia, whether in this Chamber or in the region, is something I'm sure we'd all like to see sustained.

We particularly welcome the withdrawal of the proposal to transform the Kosovo Security Force into an army. We encourage the Government of Kosovo to continue to engage with communities in Kosovo and NATO partners on any such

moves.

Despite the stability of the reporting period, we are concerned by the slow progress in the EU-facilitated dialogue. We all know that the future of Kosovo will be determined in Brussels, and not in this Chamber in New York. So it's vital that both sides re-engage and live up to their commitment to the Dialogue following elections in Serbia and forthcoming elections in Kosovo in June.

As Kosovo prepares to go to the polls, let me say that we look forward to free and fair elections and to a government that reflects the will of the people. Once formed, there is plenty to do; including continuing efforts on issues such as the Association of Serb Majority Municipalities. In that effort, they will have the UK's fullest support.

Mr President,

While not captured in the report from UNMIK, it's important to recognise in this Chamber the progress Kosovo has made internationally since we last met. Diplomatic relations were established with Brunei and Samoa, and Kosovo opened its first Embassy in Africa, in Senegal. And in a further sign of ever increasing international integration, Kosovo became the 181st member of the Worlds Customs Union; a move that will bring economic benefits for all who call Kosovo home.

This is progress that we rarely hear about in this Council. Instead, every three months, we are transported back nearly twenty years to a time of ethnic division; a time of fluid lines on maps. But in truth, these lines have long since been set. These sessions do not reflect Kosovo as it is, but Kosovo as it was. So let me reiterate that it is long past time for the Council to decrease the frequency of these sessions.

And just as these sessions must adapt, so too must UNMIK, so that it better reflects the present situation. We recognise the important work that UNMIK has done over many years for the benefit of Kosovo, and we welcome its activism on the Women, Peace, and Security agenda during the reporting period. But it's time for the Mission to take a step back. As such, we are disappointed at moves to increase the budget of UNMIK this year, particularly after numerous calls in the past two sessions for a downscaling of the Mission, and especially given that additional funds are earmarked for projects that focus on issues on which EULEX is already engaged.

Mr President, given the pressures placed on the peacekeeping budget, and given Kosovo's continued move away from instability and insecurity, the United Kingdom thinks it is long past time for UNMIK to undergo some form of reconfiguration. We look forward to receiving proposals from the Secretariat in due course.

Thank you Mr President.

Press release: UK House Price Index (HPI) for March 2017

The March data shows an annual price increase of 4.1% which takes the average property value in the UK to £215,847. Monthly house prices have fallen by 0.6% since February 2017. The monthly index figure for the UK was 113.2.

In England, the March data shows an annual price increase of 4.4% which takes the average property value to £232,530. Monthly house prices have fallen by 0.6% since February 2017.

Wales shows an annual price increase of 4.3% which takes the average property value to £147,746. Monthly house prices have risen by 1.4% since February 2017.

London shows an annual price increase of 1.5% which takes the average property value to £471,742. Monthly house prices have fallen by 1.5% since February 2017.

UK [Property Transaction statistics](#) showed that in March 2017 the total number of seasonally adjusted property transactions completed in the UK with a value of £40,000 or above has remained at a similar level for the last 3 months. See [the economic statement](#).

Sales during January 2017, the most up-to-date HM Land Registry figures available, show that:

1. The UK House Price Index (HPI) is published on the second or third Tuesday of each month with Northern Ireland figures updated quarterly. The April 2017 UK HPI will be published at 9.30am on 13 June 2017. See [calendar of release dates](#).
2. Data for the UK HPI is provided by HM Land Registry, Registers of Scotland, Land & Property Services/Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and the Valuation Office Agency.
3. The UK HPI is calculated by the Office for National Statistics and Land & Property Services/Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. It applies a hedonic regression model that uses the various sources of data on property price, in particular, HM Land Registry's Price Paid Dataset, and attributes to produce estimates of the change in house prices each month. Find out more about the methodology used from [ONS](#) and [Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency](#).

4. The first estimate for new build average price (April 2016 report) was based on a small sample which can cause volatility. A three-month moving average has been applied to the latest estimate to remove some of this volatility.
5. Work has been taking place since 2014 to develop a single, official HPI that reflects the final transaction price for sales of residential property in the UK. Using the geometric mean, it covers purchases at market value for owner-occupation and buy-to-let, excluding those purchases not at market value (such as re-mortgages), where the 'price' represents a valuation.
6. Information on residential property transactions for England and Wales, collected as part of the official registration process, is provided by HM Land Registry for properties that are sold for full market value.
7. The HM Land Registry dataset contains the sale price of the property, the date when the sale was completed, full address details, the type of property (detached, semi-detached, terraced or flat), if it is a newly built property or an established residential building and a variable to indicate if the property has been purchased as a financed transaction (using a mortgage) or as a non-financed transaction (cash purchase).
8. Repossession data is based on the number of transactions lodged with HM Land Registry by lenders exercising their power of sale.
9. For England, this is shown as volumes of repossessions recorded by Government Office Region. For Wales, there is a headline figure for the number of repossessions recorded in Wales.
10. The data can be downloaded as a .csv file. Repossession data prior to April 2016 is not available. Find out more information about [repossessions](#).
11. Background tables of the raw and cleansed aggregated data, in Excel and CSV formats, are also published monthly although Northern Ireland is on a quarterly basis. They are available for free use and re-use under the Open Government Licence.
12. As a government department established in 1862, executive agency and trading fund responsible to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, HM Land Registry keeps and maintains the Land Register for England and Wales. The Land Register has been open to public inspection since 1990.
13. With the largest transactional database of its kind detailing more than 24 million titles, HM Land Registry underpins the economy by safeguarding ownership of many billions of pounds worth of property.

14. For further information about HM Land Registry visit www.gov.uk/land-registry.
 15. Follow us on Twitter [@LandRegGov](https://twitter.com/LandRegGov) and find us on our [blog](#) [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#)
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Speech: “Ending sexual violence in conflict is central to peace building, conflict prevention and reconciliation.”

Thank you Minister, Mr President, for convening this important open debate.

And I would like to begin by welcoming both Amina and Adama back to the Council and to thank them for their very important briefings this morning. And I would like to pay particular tribute to Mina Jaf for sharing her powerful testimony with us, and for bringing the unique and valuable perspective of civil society into this Security Council Chamber.

It’s a perspective that we need to hear more of, more often. This Council works best when we are informed by the women and men most affected by the issues we discuss in this room. And sexual violence in conflict is no exception to that.

As we’ve heard today, ending sexual violence in conflict is central to peace building, conflict prevention and reconciliation. This is a message that should not need repeating in this Council. We’ve heard it many times before on our visits to South Sudan, Lake Chad, most recently Colombia.

We cannot forget the stories we heard in that dusty IDP camp in northern Nigeria. Stories of women whose daughters had been abducted by Boko Haram, likely forced into marriage and sexual slavery.

And yet, as the Secretary-General’s report clearly shows, those messages are not getting through. Not enough is being done. Women and girls, men and boys are still being subjected to sexual violence every day. In Mali, where survivors are forced to withdraw complaints so that the perpetrators can escape justice. In Syria, where not a single person has been prosecuted for Da’esh’s vile acts. In South Sudan, where we see the continuing abhorrent use of rape as a sickening means of punishing communities.

We know what needs to happen. We need to make ending sexual violence a key part of ceasefire deals. We need fewer women at kitchen tables and more women at negotiating tables. And we need even more women serving in uniform –

because for too many survivors a man in uniform is someone to fear, not someone to trust. This is a lesson that needs to be heeded by governments, by armed forces, and yes, by the UN and its peacekeepers too.

We cannot though be deterred. We must all play our part and do everything within our power to ensure these crimes are reported, that survivors are cared for, and that perpetrators, whether terrorists or state actors, are held to account.

And that's why the United Kingdom, in partnership with the UN Team of Experts and Justice Rapid Response, is running a campaign to tackle the stigma that so often surrounds survivors of sexual violence. It's why we worked with over 200 civil society experts to produce the International Protocol that helps document these crimes. And it's why we're now developing the Principles for Global Action to be launched at the General Assembly later this year. This is a new tool, developed again with civil society, but also with UN agencies and member states, to help policy makers and international organisations tackle stigma through their own work.

Ultimately, Mr President, if we want to address the appalling use of sexual violence by terrorists, and indeed by state actors, we need to look bigger; we need to look broader. We need to recognise that terrorists and state actors are enabled to carry out these sick acts when peace and security has broken down, when this Council has failed to uphold our duties enshrined in the UN Charter.

What happens in this Council, whether votes in favour, or vetoes against, has a very real bearing on that insecurity.

So let us make sure that tackling sexual violence is not something we talk about only once a year at this debate, but in every single Security Council item where it is relevant, starting with the upcoming Al-Qaeda sanctions regime review.

Nor can we shy away from the fact that these appalling acts are the direct result of gender discrimination and inequality. Until women are treated equally, paid equally, respected equally, we will have failed, not just to address this issue, but also to deliver the Global Goals that we all agreed less than two years ago.

I'd like to close, Mr President, by paying tribute to the former Special Representative, Zainab Bangura, for all her tireless efforts and exemplary leadership on this important issue. I wish her the best for the future and I look forward to working with her successor, Pramilla Patten.