

# The Northern Ireland-related Terrorism threat level in Northern Ireland has been lowered from SEVERE to SUBSTANTIAL for the first time in 12 years

The decision to change the threat level has been taken by MI5, independently of Ministers.

The Northern Ireland-related Terrorism threat level is subject to continuous review. Judgements about the threat are based on a wide range of information and it has been assessed that the threat level has now met the threshold to lower.

This is the first time that the threat level in Northern Ireland has changed in 12 years.

‘SUBSTANTIAL’ means that a terrorist attack is likely and might well occur without further warning.

Government, police and intelligence agencies will continue to work tirelessly to address the threat posed by terrorism in all its forms.

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, The Rt Hon Brandon Lewis CBE MP said:

“This is the first time the threat level in Northern Ireland has changed since 2010 and shows the significant progress that Northern Ireland has made, and continues to make, towards a more peaceful, more prosperous and safer society.

“It is a testament to the ongoing commitment to protecting the peace process and tackling Northern Ireland-related terrorism, and the tremendous efforts of the Police Service of Northern Ireland and MI5 for their hard won gains over the past decade.

“However, it is not a time for complacency. There is still a minority who wish to cause harm in Northern Ireland. As ever, the public should remain vigilant and report any concerns they may have to the police.”

Notes to Editors:

You can find out more about how the threat levels are set, what they mean and when they have changed, by visiting [www.gov.uk/terrorism-national-emergency](http://www.gov.uk/terrorism-national-emergency).

The statement made on 22 March 2022 by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Brandon Lewis CBE MP is available [here](#).

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# First official analysis of UK's internal market published

The OIM's report demonstrates the scale and importance of trade, which is likely to exceed £190 billion annually, between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

In its report, the OIM – part of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) – [outlines the flow of goods and services across internal market borders](#) as well as offering new insights on the extent to which regulatory policies differ between nations in the UK.

The report includes new evidence on the economics of the internal market, including data from 2 surveys.

The OIM report's key economic findings include:

- Most firms find it easy to trade across UK nations at present, with the extent of cross-border trading either staying the same or growing over the past year
- The highest proportion of cross-border trade was in manufacturing and wholesale/retail, with each sector representing more than a third of total trade
- Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland trade more with the rest of the UK than with the EU or the rest of the world (England does not publish intra-UK trade data)
- Many markets are local and larger firms are more likely to trade with other UK nations than smaller ones

Andrea Coscelli, Chief Executive of the CMA, said:

This first-of-a-kind report on the flow and regulation of trade between the nations of the UK illustrates not only the vast scale of the internal market, but also the significance of the work the OIM has been tasked with doing.

With billions of pounds worth of trade flowing between the 4 nations every year, it's important that the internal market operates in the interests of people across the UK. While the OIM has found little substantial regulatory difference emerging between the nations so far, this is unsurprising given how little time has passed since the implementation of Brexit.

By deepening our understanding of cross-border trade, the work of the OIM will help make buying and selling across the UK as easy as possible, wherever you're based.

Following the UK's departure from the EU, significant powers have been returned to the UK government and devolved administrations, increasing the possibility of regulatory differences between the 4 nations. Part of the OIM's assessment of the internal market therefore focused on whether regulations made by the 4 governments have begun to differ from one another more since the end of the Brexit transition period on 31 December 2020.

The OIM has found no evidence of substantial new regulatory differences emerging between the 4 administrations since the UK left the EU. However, this is not unexpected at this stage and differences might appear over time as governments develop and implement their programmes.

Different policies in different administrations could have implications – both positive and negative – for cross-border trade including changes in the price, quality and choice of goods and services. The OIM has identified some sectors where some regulatory differences may be more likely including: the environment, energy use, agriculture, animal welfare, food, drink and health, and some safety-related matters.

Ahead of the publication of its first statutory reports in March next year, the OIM will continue to work collaboratively with the 4 governments of the UK to help people, businesses and policymakers by improving the understanding of trade within the UK, including by developing new data. The OIM will also consider any emerging policy developments that might affect businesses' ability to sell their products and services around the UK.

The OIM is also ready to respond to requests from the governments for reports and advice on specific regulatory provisions. People and businesses can [report any issues that they think impact on the UK internal market by completing the OIM's webform](#).

1. The OIM was [launched in September 2021](#) to provide non-binding technical and economic advice to all 4 governments of the UK on the effect on the UK internal market of specific regulatory provisions that they introduce. The OIM operates independently of all 4 governments.
2. Since leaving the EU, significant powers have returned to the UK government and devolved administrations, increasing the possibility of regulatory differences between the nations. The OIM's work assists governments in understanding how effectively companies are able to sell their products and services across the 4 nations of the UK and the impact of regulatory provisions on this for consideration alongside wider policy issues.
3. A provision (for example, legislation, regulation etc.) that is necessary to implement the Northern Ireland Protocol will fall outside of the scope of the UK Internal Market Act and the OIM will not be able to offer advice or produce reports on it.
4. The OIM is publishing this report providing an overview of the UK internal market as a discretionary output under section 33(1) of the UK Internal Market Act, six months after its establishment and a year before it is required to produce its first statutory annual and five-yearly reports.
5. The OIM is working collaboratively with the Office for National

Statistics and analysts across the 4 UK nations to review and improve data on trade within the UK.

6. More information can be found on the [Office for the Internal Market homepage](#).
7. [Research by the Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence](#) estimates intra-UK trade is likely to exceed £190 billion annually.
8. The CMA commissioned a telephone survey of nearly 600 businesses across the UK in order to understand the economics of the UK internal market in more detail and to provide more recent data than the published statistics. Analysts in all 4 governments provided valuable input to this work.
9. The CMA included questions on intra-UK trade in the [Office for National Statistics' Business Insights and Conditions survey](#). The survey shows that the highest proportion of cross-border trade was in manufacturing (42%) and wholesale/retail (40%).
10. For media queries, please contact the press office via [press@cma.gov.uk](mailto:press@cma.gov.uk) or on 020 3738 6460.

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## [Victims of Post Office horizon scandal to benefit from new compensation scheme](#)

- Chancellor Rishi Sunak launches new government compensation scheme for postmasters who played crucial role in uncovering Horizon IT scandal
- Scheme will ensure the postmasters who were the first to take legal action against the Post Office over the failings of its Horizon IT computer system will be compensated fully and fairly
- After winning the landmark case, the group only received a fraction of the £43 million pay-out due to a "no win, no fee" agreement with their litigation funding company

Rishi Sunak said a new compensation scheme will be set up in the coming months targeted at the postmasters who brought and won the landmark High Court case against the Post Office over the failings. The 2019 ruling paved the way for millions of pounds worth of future pay-outs and led to the Court of Appeal quashing the convictions of postmasters who were wrongly accused of committing crimes.

Despite winning nearly £43 million in compensation in 2019, the group was left financially disadvantaged after having to pay significant legal costs

based on a “no win, no fee” agreement with Therium – the company which funded its litigation. Due to the terms of their legal agreement each postmaster received a small fraction of the settlement – equating to around £20,000 each.

Their action meant they were also ineligible to apply to the Historical Shortfall Scheme (HSS) which was set up to by the Post Office following the scandal to compensate postmasters who had to personally cover shortfalls in their branch’s accounts caused by the Horizon IT.

The new scheme will ensure that those who uncovered the injustice receive the same level of compensation as the postmasters who claimed through the HSS.

**Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:**

Whilst it cannot take away the years of distress, the postmasters who have suffered terribly over the Post Office Horizon scandal deserve to be fairly compensated.

That’s why we’ll be introducing a new compensation scheme for those who led and won the landmark legal case over the failings, so they can receive their fair share.

We’ll continue to stand by postmasters and their families.

**Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak said:**

The Horizon IT dispute has had a devastating impact on postmasters and their families, with many losing their livelihoods or being wrongly convicted for crimes they didn’t commit.

Without the efforts of these postmasters, this terrible injustice may have never been uncovered so it is only right that they are compensated fully and fairly.

That is why we have set up this new compensation scheme for those who played a crucial role bringing this scandal to light, which I hope provides a measure of comfort.

**Postal Affairs Minister Paul Scully said:**

The pain and distress that the Horizon scandal has inflicted on hundreds of postmasters over the years cannot be overstated.

Without the efforts of the 555 pioneering postmasters who brought this to court, this injustice may never have seen the light of day nor would the statutory inquiry have been set up, which is why I made it my priority to ensure they are all fairly compensated.

While we can't right the wrongs of the past, I hope this important compensation package is a turning of the page, as we continue working with the Post Office to ensure something like this can never happen again.

The scheme comes after the government announced a separate scheme last year to provide funding for full and final settlements for eligible postmasters who have had their Horizon-related conviction overturned, with those eligible to receive an interim payment of up to £100,000 each.

More details of the new scheme, including how postmasters can submit compensation claims, will be set out by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy in due course.

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## [Shepherds Bush Housing Association Limited – update to gradings under review listing](#)

Press release

Providers being investigated for an issue regarding their compliance with the Governance and Financial Viability Standard are added to the regulator's GUR list.



The Regulator of Social Housing reports today (22 March) that it has updated Shepherds Bush Housing Association Limited's gradings under review listing.

We are currently investigating a matter which may impact on the provider's compliance with both the governance and financial viability elements of the Governance and Financial Viability Standard.

On 22 December 2021, we initially placed the provider on the gradings under

review list in respect of its governance grading only.

The regulator notifies that a provider's grading is under review when its compliant grade (G1 and G2 for governance, and V1 and V2 for viability) is being investigated in relation to an issue which may result in a downgrade to a non-compliant grade (G3 or G4 for governance, V3 or V4 for viability).

The regulator's [gradings under review list](#) is available on its website.

## Further information

For press office contact details, see our [Media enquiries page](#).

For general enquiries, please email [enquiries@rsh.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@rsh.gov.uk) or call 0300 124 5225.

## Notes to editors

- The GUR lists providers where we are investigating a matter that might result in them being assessed as non-compliant in relation to the regulator's Governance and/or Financial Viability Standard.
- The [regulatory standards](#) can be found on the regulator's website.
- The regulator promotes a viable, efficient and well-governed social housing sector able to deliver and maintain homes of appropriate quality that meet a range of needs. It does this by undertaking robust economic regulation focusing on governance, financial viability and value for money that maintains lender confidence and protects the taxpayer. It also sets consumer standards and may take action if these standards are breached and there is a significant risk of serious detriment to tenants or potential tenants.

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## [New body to make UK world-leading centre for telecoms innovation](#)

- Will guide firms seeking R&D funding or collaboration on Open RAN and other disruptive tech
- Comes as new stats show two-thirds of UK premises can access lightning-fast gigabit broadband

The UK will be a world leader in telecoms research and development under plans for a new government-funded organisation dedicated to boosting innovation in the country's telecoms supply chain.

The UK Telecoms Innovation Network (UKTIN) will act as an information point for telecoms companies looking to access funding or testing facilities for R&D and opportunities to collaborate on developing new and improved technologies for UK mobile and broadband networks.

The government has today [launched](#) a competition for organisations to apply for up to £10 million to establish and run the centre, which will support innovators at the right time to scale up, develop their products, gain better access to telecoms markets and drive exports abroad.

It comes as new independent figures from [ThinkBroadband](#) show that two-thirds of UK homes and businesses (66.75%) can now access lightning-fast gigabit broadband. This is a huge rise on 2019 when coverage was just 6 per cent and shows rapid progress is being made in the government's plan to speed up the rollout of better broadband and level up communities with faster internet speeds.

The UKTIN will be run by a consortium of organisations with telecoms expertise and will support knowledge sharing and collaboration on open and interoperable network technologies such as Open RAN, which allows telecoms companies to mix and match telecoms equipment rather than having to rely on a single supplier when building or maintaining networks.

The technology is considered crucial to the government's £250 million [strategy](#) to lower barriers for firms seeking to enter the UK telecoms supply chain – which will increase competition, drive up the quality of products and services and reduce the UK's current reliance on a small number of international suppliers.

Digital Infrastructure Minister Julia Lopez said:

The UK Telecoms Innovation Network will be the first port of call for any telecoms company looking to access R&D funding and a matchmaker for firms looking to join forces on cutting-edge projects.

Ultimately this is about making the UK the best place in the world to develop rapid and seamless new technology for the digital networks that will power our economy well into the 21st century.

The UKTIN will be tasked with creating an up-to-date database of information on R&D funding in the public and private sector. It will also create an annual report which maps out the latest developments and opportunities in disruptive and innovative telecoms technology in the UK, including Open RAN.

Setting up the UKTIN was one of the key recommendations in last year's report from the Telecoms Diversification Taskforce: an independent body set up by

the government to advise on necessary steps to transform the UK's telecoms supply chain so it is more competitive, innovative and secure.

The UKTIN is expected to be up and running by the end of the year, with the winning consortium announced in the summer.

**ENDS**

Notes to editors

- Up to £10m is available for the competition. We are asking applicants to submit two bids one for £5m and another for £10m. We will then determine the bid which represents the most value for money.
- Funding for the UKTIN is subject to Programme Business Case approval.
- The deadline for applications is noon on 20 May 2022.
- We will be holding a briefing event for companies who are interested in applying to the competition on the 7 April 2022. Please register your interest online [here](#) to attend.