

## New proposals to introduce 'superfast' patent service

Intellectual Property Minister Lord Younger has confirmed plans to bring in a new 'superfast' patent processing service, which will be capable of granting patents in just 90 days. Currently it can take a number of years to gain patent protection. This length of time is usually suitable for most patent applicants as it gives applicants time to make important commercial decisions and change their strategy in light of any decisions. However the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) has recognised that this timescale may not suit everyone's needs. Government has published a consultation on how the service should work, following on from Business Secretary Vince Cable's announcement last year that the service would be in place in 2013. The deadline for response to the consultation is 12 June. Commenting on the announcement, Lord Younger stated: "Government is committed to making it easy for innovators to turn their ideas into business growth. I am sure this will help to create a streamlined and flexible patent service and bring more choice for those who use it". (Source: BIS) <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-fund-will-help-regulators-and-business-work-together-for-growth>



## Transport Committee seeks views on road safety and low carbon vehicles

The House of Commons will be debating Transport Select Committee reports into road safety and low carbon vehicles in a Westminster Hall debate on Thursday 25 April. Ahead of the debate, the Transport Committee is seeking views on road safety and low carbon vehicles, particularly in relation to new developments since the 2012 Committee reports were published. Areas of discussion are likely to be government's strategic framework for road safety, including improving the safety of young drivers, and the Transport Committee report 'Plug-in Places, Plugged-in Policy?' (Source: House of Commons Transport Committee)

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/transport-committee/news/road-safety--lcv-wh-debates/>

## HMRC rule change on vehicle imports

HMRC has announced a change to vehicle import rules, which means that vehicles entering the country for permanent use on UK roads will now have to be notified to HMRC within 14 days and any VAT due paid or accounted for. Until this new process is complete, it will not be possible to register or licence a vehicle with the DVLA. The quickest and easiest way to make any notification will be through a new online system called Notification of Vehicle Arrivals (NOVA) which provides immediate HMRC acknowledgement when making an online notification as well as a calculation of any VAT due. Up to 50 vehicles can be logged in one submission. Notifications can also be made by completing a paper form (VAT NOVA1) and returning it to HMRC. The new system does not apply to vehicles registered on the DVLA "Secure scheme" (AFRL, V55/1,2, or V55/4 with V55/1 attached). (Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2013/04/hmrc-rule-change-on-vehicle-imports/>

# Proposals for a Guild for the FE sector approved

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) has approved proposals for the formation of a Guild for the learning and skills sector, with annual funding of £18.8 million (excluding VAT) for 2013-14 (1 August to 31 March) and 2014-15 (full year) allocated to take the Guild forward. The new Guild will encompass all parts of the sector delivering learning and skills education and training, and will focus on professionalism and continuous development of the workforce to maximise future opportunities and help continually improve learner outcomes and experience. It will be set up as a Company Limited by Guarantee and registered as a charity with Board members from a range of organisations representing providers in the sector including the Association of Colleges (AoC), the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) who will also cover the third sector with the Third Sector National Learning Alliance (TSNLA), and the Association of Adult Education and Training Organisations (who operate under the name of HOLEX), but also drawing in wider expertise. The Guild, with a new Board and independent Chair, will develop its vision and mission around five themes: improving learner experience and outcomes; enhancing the reputation of the sector; developing provider good practice; making the sector an attractive place to join and work; and promoting and championing equality and diversity across the sector. It will also play a key role in addressing such issues as improving the dual professionalism and currency of the workforce, by, for example, promoting links with businesses and communities. As a guiding principle, it will aim to encompass everyone working in the sector, although an initial necessary focus will be on teaching and learning staff and those directly supporting learner outcomes and experience. (Source: FE Guild) <http://www.feguild.info/>



## Week ahead

### Commons Committees

Monday 22 April

Transport Committee (4.05pm, Thatcher room)

The work of VOSA

### Commons Chamber

Thursday 25 April

Transport questions (9:30am)

Business questions (10:30am)

### Westminster Hall

Thursday 25 April

Transport Committee debate on road safety and low carbon vehicles (1:30pm)

### House of Lords

No relevant activity