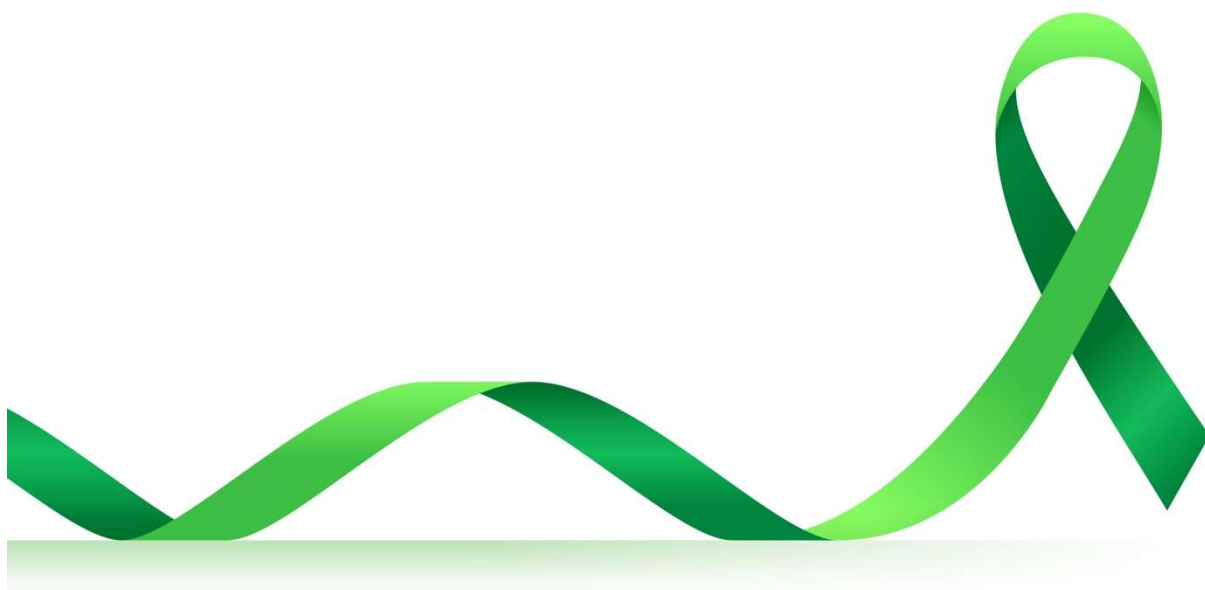


The Compulsory Purchase Association

MENTAL HEALTH REPORT 2025

IMPROVING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF PRACTITIONERS
AND THOSE AFFECTED BY THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION
OF THEIR INTERESTS FOR THE DELIVERY OF
INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING AND REGENERATION.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Compulsory purchase is a process laden with stress for parties adversely affected by it or living under its shadow. It is also stressful for promoters and professional advisors who engage with such affected parties. There are many drivers behind individual personal mental health issues, the pressures of which are heightened by post pandemic sensitivity. The focus of this report is not a medical one, but a pragmatic one. It considers the impact of compulsory purchase processes and conduct with a view to encouraging the establishment of better practice and support for and within the sector.
2. Compulsory purchase powers do not usually exist in the absence of either a development project that is subject to the planning process, or an infrastructure project, typically captured by the nationally significant infrastructure project regime or a hybrid bill.
3. It is not unusual for planning for such schemes to take ten years or more from conception to authorisation – then up to a further five years for the exercise of compulsory purchase powers. The years of uncertainty and inertia often lead to an inability to make normal life decisions, such as to move for work or schools, or to take key business decisions. This impacts on individuals in many ways and can be extremely stressful.
4. During this time, affected parties can come under significant personal and financial pressure and distress, often without any statutory recourse to compensation.
5. Compulsory purchase can become a hostile process, not necessarily of the affected party's own making, in which their property interest is taken by legal process, at a timing substantially outside of their control. These ingredients can undermine the mental health of those affected. Serious consequences can include mental breakdown, destroyed relationships, blighted lives and businesses. It has even led to death by suicide.
6. It is clear from the survey and workshops carried out by the CPA that stress and adverse mental health impacts are not restricted to affected parties and their stakeholders. Professionals acting for claimants and promoters are also suffering from mental distress. Pressures include dealing with emotionally difficult cases, financial constraints, insufficient empowerment and a complex array of legal and regulatory pitfalls.
7. The Health and Safety Executive ('HSE') is clear that "Employers have a legal duty to protect workers from stress at work by doing a risk assessment and acting on it. This is the same duty you have to protect people from other health and safety risks."¹ Those responsibilities can extend beyond just employees, potentially covering stakeholders and other parties that they could impact.
8. The Coroner at the Inquest into the death of a headteacher who died by suicide concluded that a critical Ofsted inspection 'contributed' to her death. The relationship between a body with statutory powers and the affected party has distinct similarities with the compulsory purchase sector and should not be ignored.
9. Those involved in compulsory purchase can, through improved behaviours and processes, enable changes in the approach to scheme delivery which, at its core, recognises mental health concerns and seeks to mitigate the very real impacts felt by affected parties.

¹ Health and Safety Executive, *Work-related stress and how to manage it*.

PREFACE

The Compulsory Purchase Association ('CPA')

10. The CPA is a not-for-profit member organisation that promotes best and effective practice in the delivery of land for infrastructure, housing and regeneration through the use of compulsory purchase powers.
11. Its members represent both acquiring authorities and claimants affected by compulsory acquisition and come from a range of professional disciplines involved in the compulsory purchase process, including chartered surveyors, solicitors, barristers, forensic accountants, planners and land referencers.
12. The CPA is a non-partisan organisation and neither supports nor opposes specific public works schemes or privately promoted developments. Its objective is to work for the public benefit in relation to compulsory purchase and compensation in all its forms. It seeks to promote the highest professional standards amongst practitioners at all levels, and to ensure that the legal framework for compulsory purchase and compensation is clear, fair and effective.

Improving mental health of practitioners and those affected by compulsory purchase powers

13. The topic of raising awareness and improving mental health is an important societal debate. Poor mental health was estimated by the London School of Economics and the NHS Confederation's Mental Health Network to carry an economic and social cost of at least £300 billion a year to the UK in 2022; comprising economic costs of £110bn, human costs of £130bn, and health and care costs of £60bn.²
14. The World Health Organization defines 'mental health' as *"... a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It has intrinsic and instrumental value and is integral to our well-being. At any one time, a diverse set of individual, family, community and structural factors may combine to protect or undermine mental health. Although most people are resilient, people who are exposed to adverse circumstances – including poverty, violence, disability and inequality – are at higher risk of developing a mental health condition."*³
15. The CPA's Mental Health Working Group was set up in 2021 to explore issues raised by members around wellness and/or mental health, both of those affected by compulsory purchase and those working in the industry. The Working Group was principally made up of those that work on behalf of affected parties and acquiring authorities. The Working Group did not include affected parties themselves and had limited direct representation from acquiring authorities.

² Centre for Mental Health, Cardoso and McHayle, *The Economic and Social Costs of Mental Ill Health*, March 2024, p.5.

³ www.who.int/health-topics/mental-health#tab=tab_1

16. A survey was undertaken of CPA members in late 2021 and its findings were published in 2022. A key finding of the survey was the following:

In the survey we asked compulsory purchase advisors whether they observed high levels of stress and anxiety in the course of their work on a typical scheme.

97.3% of claimants exhibited high levels of anxiety and stress

75.3% of advisors admitted having suffered from, or seen colleagues suffer from, high levels of anxiety and stress.

17. At the CPA Annual Conference in June 2022, and more recently at the CPA Annual Convention in October 2024, the Mental Health Working Group presented to members of the CPA alongside the mental health charity 'Change Mental Health'. The Working Group has also facilitated two workshops to explore the way the industry works and to delve further into the stresses and behaviours involved in the compulsory purchase process.

Scope of this report

18. The CPA is aware that there are many drivers behind individual personal mental health issues, the pressures of which are heightened by post pandemic sensitivity. The focus of this report is not a medical one, but a pragmatic one. It considers the impact of the compulsory purchase processes and conduct within it.
19. It seeks to identify, collate, and assess issues concerning mental health distress in compulsory purchase processes and, to a lesser extent, planning processes, based on the survey findings and the workshops.
20. Four outcomes were identified:
1. to produce a report to share with the industry and interested parties;
 2. to identify learning outputs, in the form of changing behaviours and language, to mitigate and reduce mental health distress;
 3. to facilitate a debate as to what 'good' looks like; and
 4. to support legislators to devise procedural reform where necessary.
21. This report is not an industry report, nor is it necessarily reflective of the views of the whole compulsory purchase sector. It does, however, provide commentary, examples, and snapshots of the challenges faced by those working in the sector.
22. The CPA has not undertaken any work to verify the comments and observations made by individuals. Behaviours reported are not assigned to organisations or individuals. Feedback of individuals involved in the workshops is anonymously summarised in the Appendix to this report.

23. The CPA permits the use, reproduction or circulation of this report in whole or in part, without its prior written consent providing the source is acknowledged, however this report is not intended for use in the context of compulsory purchase or planning inquiries, Tribunal proceedings or similar, either in support for or in objection to particular projects or schemes, or otherwise.

THE NEED FOR COMPULSORY PURCHASE POWERS

24. As a country, we are faced with significant demand to replace obsolete infrastructure, not least to deal with the transition from fossil fuels to a net zero energy supply.
25. As a nation, we also need more homes, schools, hospitals, water infrastructure (fresh and waste), telecommunication, railways, roads, and airport capacity.
26. The planning system uses compulsory purchase powers to secure land and rights required for a project. It is a tool used to guarantee and secure delivery. However, the process of land acquisition to enable delivery of these projects can be protracted.
27. The delivery of the motorway network, High Speed 1, Stansted Airport, the Elizabeth Line (previously Crossrail 1), and many other projects were promoted as essential infrastructure. Now that they are operational, they have proven to be very well used indeed.
28. The last completed major scheme, the Elizabeth Line, has become a major economic driver and resulted in regeneration and renewal of areas where stations have been located.

“The Elizabeth line has been a game-changer for our city, transforming travel across London and the South East and delivering a £42bn boost to the UK economy. In just two years, more than 350 million journeys have been made and the line has directly impacted the development of 55,000 new homes and significantly supported employment growth.”

“The Elizabeth Line has played a vital role in our recovery from the pandemic and is helping to build a fairer, greener and more prosperous London for everyone.”

Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London, May 2024

29. The use of compulsory purchase for the London Olympics has also revitalised East London, and other locations used to host sporting events. Legacies can provide opportunities for those affected by compulsory purchase to be a part of what comes next.

“Compulsory purchase of property is an essential tool in a modern democratic society. It facilitates planned and orderly development... Hand in hand with the power to acquire land without the owner’s consent, is an obligation to pay full and fair compensation.”

Lord Nicholls of Birkenhead.

Waters and Others v Welsh Development Agency [2004] UKHL 19

- 30. Compulsory purchase powers do not exist in the absence of either a development that is subject to the planning process, or an infrastructure project, typically captured by the nationally significant infrastructure project regime or a hybrid bill.
- 31. There is a critical balance to be struck between enabling the delivery of schemes, both for the benefit of scheme promoters / acquiring authorities and the wider public interest, whilst helping directly affected parties to get on with their lives. The processes, governance and conducts can make this very difficult to achieve. The new MHCLG guidance now highlights the need to address this through direct engagement.⁴

TIME FRAMES

- 32. Bringing forward a scheme takes time. The timeframes extend for years, not months, reflecting the original ideas becoming public, early land identification and safeguarding, extensive planning and design consultations, including an examination or public inquiry, and the subsequent authorisation process.
- 33. It is not unusual for planning for such a scheme to take ten years or more from conception to authorisation. It can take up to a further five years for the exercise of compulsory purchase powers, the timing of which is within the control of the acquiring authority, not an affected party. After powers are exercised and possession taken, it can take many years to settle a claim for compensation, which can include litigation if the claim is referred to the Upper Chamber (Lands Tribunal) for determination.
- 34. Assuming the average age of retirement is 70, the impact of the development of a scheme with compulsory purchase powers could represent c20% of a person's working life, with another c10% or more for the compulsory purchase to be exercised and claims settled.
- 35. Properties that are safeguarded for major projects can be affected for decades. 'Safeguarding' is a process by which a Secretary of State identifies to planning authorities and the public that an area of land and properties may be needed for a scheme, with the effect that any planning application must be notified to the promoting authority.
- 36. Safeguarding is an important planning tool, but its general impact is to create blight on those properties affected, as the market will know that they might be compulsorily purchased in the future such that they cannot be readily traded. There is no appeal mechanism or time constraint on how long safeguarding can remain in place. The longevity of safeguarding and the market's perception of the embedded risk to property, can have a highly detrimental effect on affected parties.
- 37. Clearly, more complex schemes will take longer to develop. It has taken decades to deliver the Elizabeth Line. The first cross London routes were conceived in 1941. 'Crossrail' first

⁴ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, *Guidance on the Compulsory Purchase Process*, January 2025.

emerged as a concept in 1974, with the first Safeguarding Directions made in 1994. Following the Crossrail Act 2008, the Elizabeth Line was officially opened in May 2022.

38. HS2 Ltd was created in 2009, with the Safeguarding Directions first published in 2013, prior to the submission of the Hybrid Bill for Phase 1. The HS2 Construction Update 2025 published on 30 December 2024 expected the railway to be operational in the “...early 2030s”.⁵
39. Even where schemes have been cancelled, safeguarding has remained in place. There is currently no statutory mechanism to challenge this, leading to immense frustration and long term adverse economic impacts for those affected. As of May 2025, safeguarding was still in place for the HS2 route through to Leeds (cancelled in November 2021) and from Crewe to Manchester (cancelled in October 2023). Statutory blight claims, which require early acquisition by the acquiring authority, can only be made for owner occupied residential properties and very small businesses. There is, therefore, only limited redress for those affected by safeguarding. Furthermore, the claims process itself can be time consuming, uncertain and stressful.
40. Delays in the delivery of schemes mean that the public benefit remains unrealised, bringing into question the underlying compelling case in the public interest on which the compulsory purchase powers must be justified. There is a significant benefit to delivering schemes on time and within budget. Sadly, inertia, delay, and indecision are far too often the characteristics of the overall planning system, which impacts the subsequent use of compulsory purchase powers.

COMPENSATION

41. When land is compulsorily acquired, the financial compensation for the loss of property and rights is based on the underlying concept of ‘equivalence’ – that the affected party is left no better or worse off financially as a result of the compulsory acquisition, being entitled to compensation that is neither more nor less than the value of their loss⁶.
42. However, the statutory right to compensation does not arise until compulsory purchase is implemented in respect of the specific property interest. This can mean that property remains under threat of compulsory purchase for many years with no right for the owner to claim compensation, including for the costs of seeking professional advice on the process.
43. An affected party is required to prove any losses are directly caused by the compulsory purchase. They are required to fund the professional advice that they seek, sometimes for many years before compensation is paid. Professional fees can be recovered if deemed appropriate by the acquiring authority, but there is no statutory requirement for the acquiring authority to fund professional fees until a vesting declaration has been made or a Notice to Treat served to acquire the land.

⁵ HS2, *HS2 Construction Update, 2025*, 30 December 2024.

⁶ In certain circumstances, where 'hope value' is involved, this may not be compensated for on an equivalence basis.

44. Many acquiring authorities are public bodies with fixed budgets. The requirement to pay full and fair compensation to affected parties arises within the context of rigorous controls around the use of and value for money requirements attached to public finances. Wider public interest benefits may not align with those of individuals whose land is subject to compulsory purchase. This should be acknowledged and more support provided to affected parties early on, with discussions in accordance with MHCLG Guidance as a minimum.
45. An affected party can ultimately be left in a position where their land is not acquired, for example, if the scheme does not proceed, with no compensation to reflect the disruption and losses that they have suffered over a significant number of years.
46. The principle of equivalence, whilst an acceptable basis for financial compensation, provides no guidance around the non-financial aspects of the treatment of affected parties. This includes what may be perceived as providing adequate levels of "protection" for individuals, based on modern day standards of how people should be treated, which could be more than simply financial compensation.

IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH

47. Compulsory purchase goes to the root of many people's sense of belonging, which is one of the fundamental factors governing emotional life. The basic dynamic of compulsory purchase powers are a state sanctioned order that someone no longer has a right to their home, their business premises, or (sometimes) their business or farm.
48. Property ownership and employment lays down personal roots; the compulsory purchase process uproots them. These factors contribute to creating a place and role within a community and as such, a belonging. Compulsory purchase powers are often used to develop areas which need regenerating, but that does not mean that these areas have no community. These communities, through language, social and financial barriers, may be less able to professionally articulate their needs and may be particularly vulnerable.
49. Psychologists and medical professionals identify five major stressors in life. The death of a loved one, divorce, moving home, major illness or injury, and job loss or insecurity.⁷ These situations generally exist for a limited period, but most have a recognised end point. Living in the shadow of a Compulsory Purchase Order ('CPO'), or having your land safeguarded, is more protracted. Outcomes and, critically, the solutions and timings of such, are rarely in the control of the affected party, or capable of being meaningfully influenced by them.
50. There is an inevitability to the pressures and stresses that arise from acquisition by compulsion and an imbalance of power. This can result in adverse impacts on the mental

⁷ University Hospitals, *The Top 5 Most Stressful Life Events and How to Handle Them*, 2 July 2015 (available online at uhhospitals.org).

health of those involved.

51. The years of uncertainty and the inability to make normal life decisions, such as to move for work or school, or to expand a business or farm, impact individuals in many ways and can be extremely distressing. During this time, the messaging around the planning and public interest benefits forming the justification for the use of compulsory purchase powers can be misinterpreted. The situation can be exacerbated through the use of social media, the role of lobby groups, and through local and national conventional press, sometimes by those with no local connection. Delays in the process create tension and impact the mental health of those affected.
52. During the time of public debate and consultation, objections and redesign, affected parties can come under significant personal and financial pressure and distress, without necessarily any statutory recourse to compensation.
53. One size does not fit all and access to an array of support is vital. Mental health pays no regard to stereotypes, and coping strategies are unique. There are likely to be different coping abilities according to ethnicity, gender, religion, employment, lifestyles, age and personal support mechanisms available.
54. As humans we have fight or flight built into our DNA. Some affected parties when faced with compulsory purchase will take 'flight' in that they will try to get as far away as possible. This may result in them making short term financial decisions that lead to longer term complications when assessing compensation and issues such as mitigating losses.
55. Some affected parties will 'freeze' and deal with it another day. This has the potential to be more difficult or costly at that later point. This group of people are perhaps the most difficult to engage with. With no engagement, there can be limited understanding, limited progression of any claims or acts of mitigation, ultimately resulting in a delay to the scheme or an increase in costs.
56. Some affected parties will 'fight' against a scheme as they see this as protecting their interest, their families or their communities. The longer these positions are in place the more entrenched they can become. It can become difficult to persuade someone who has taken the 'fight' response to then step down, potentially at some embarrassment.
57. Frequently, a lack of understanding of the process amplifies the distress. There can be a wider adverse ripple effect for affected communities and businesses and those that rely on them.
58. Compulsory purchase never happens to most of the population. It rarely affects someone more than once in their life. Having the powers of the state directed at a party, forcing the loss of land or rights, sometimes without certainty that those powers will be exercised, creates emotions around the loss of control, insecurity, and uncertainty which can lead to rage, despair and worse.

59. This is compounded by the process being riddled with jargon, old fashioned phrases and misnomers. Frequently the process becomes politicised; the media, social media, lobbyists and vested interests all appear to be expressing opinions over 'your property and life'.
60. Being forced to move and being unable to do so within a person or family's existing community and support network, including childcare, adult care, schools and possibly jobs, is difficult and destabilising. All of this can occur without a clear timeline, or at least not a timeline that an affected party can control.
61. For farmers, the inability to readily replace lost farmland can risk the viability of their farm. These concerns are compounded by the dynastic expectations of farming families, which can be broken through the loss of land, all putting farm workers' livelihoods at risk. These effects can widen the anxiety to a much larger cohort, which is recognised as being particularly susceptible to stress.
62. For businesses, the ability of directors to implement the decisions that a business needs to grow and survive can be hampered. The pressure from the business's own stakeholders (including their banks, shareholders and employees) must be managed along with the threat of relocation or even extinguishment of the business.
63. A business and farm's stakeholders extend much wider and include bank managers, suppliers, customers and staff. The pressures can become extreme, impacting their ability to cope, at work, at home, and within their communities. This has wider economic as well as wellbeing impacts.
64. The issue of mitigation, particularly in a business context, is a significant area that causes claimant stress, both financially and mentally. The concept of 'equivalence' can be seriously tested. In this context, the term 'mitigation' is at times misused as a negotiating tool by some acquiring authorities or their agents. All involved are subject to pressure points, arising from budgets, the notion of 'taxpayers' money', and audit trails.
65. The professionals advising affected parties and those acting for, or employed by, an acquiring authority, can also become exposed to the stresses set out above. Many take on pastoral support roles for their clients and fellow professionals, in addition to their professional responsibilities to clients, employers and the professional bodies that they are regulated by.
66. The economic pressures on professionals can also be intense and stressful. This ranges from the pressure on acquiring authorities to deliver schemes within affordable budgets, to the inability of professional practices to sustain the cashflow strain on behalf of clients. Furthermore, where costs are not recoverable or pressure is placed on fee rates, the compulsory purchase sector can be rendered unattractive or even unviable.
67. The scope of responsibilities and knowledge required to provide professional services when dealing with compulsory purchase can be exceptionally wide, challenging and adversarial.
68. Where things go wrong, or threats are made that challenge professional conduct, this can potentially have wide and disastrous effects, not just for the professional, but also a practice,

which may become uninsurable and unable to trade. The mental health impacts are inevitably very challenging in this regard too.

69. In summary, compulsory purchase has the potential to cause serious impacts on a wide range of stakeholders, ranging from destroyed relationships, blighted lives and businesses, through to mental breakdown and, at worst, suicide.

REMEDIATION

70. It is vitally important that steps to avoid adverse mental health impacts on those involved or affected by compulsory purchase is recognised as a sector wide priority, in which we all have a personal part to play, and can each make a difference.
71. The processes and behaviours in our industry will need to change and provision made for training and supporting those working in the sector.
72. Beyond the planning and compulsory purchase world, some employers provide employee support schemes, particularly where jobs, by their nature, are potentially distressing, e.g., the police, emergency services and social services. Indeed, many professional organisations already provide mental health support through third parties. Access to such support through employer programmes or the CPA must be prioritised.
73. There is a need to ensure that appropriate training is provided to practitioners that is suitable for their individual roles. This is needed for their own protection, but also to identify and seek to mitigate adverse impacts on those that they interact with.
74. Major firms may well have resources internally or purchased from external providers, but these are likely to be more generic in nature, which assume dealings with an equivalent professional, colleague, manager or willing vendor. They are unlikely to recognise the specific challenges faced by those operating in this sector.
75. The CPA could, through its depth of community experience, support focussed training. With the aid and guidance of mental health and other specialist professionals, the CPA could develop appropriate programmes.
76. More broadly, the CPA community can work together to bring forward and implement changes that will lead to properly functioning and fair processes, that recognise and seek to mitigate adverse mental health impacts.
77. Estate regeneration has learned to be more community focussed and the compulsory purchase sector could look to these schemes for guidance. Whilst there is no legal requirement to relocate individuals, or businesses, or attend to community ties as part of a regeneration scheme, failing to address these issues and unlock the possible benefits that arise from them can become significant challenges, and/or represent lost opportunities.

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78. There is a need to recognise that this is a relatively stressful professional environment. As such, a culture of respect, value and tolerance of our different roles and responsibilities should be encouraged. A culture which fosters training, peer review and mentoring should reap rewards and ultimately result in compliance with appropriate professional standards.
 79. The importance of efficient and fair claims handling is widely acknowledged, and the role of advisors and professional teams should not be downplayed. Acknowledgement of professional standards and the value derived from obtaining appropriate and timely professional advice should be championed, enabling acquiring authorities to fully understand the benefits that can be realised from funding early support for affected parties.
 80. In many cases, settlements cannot be fairly achieved without taking professional advice and transparency on costs of obtaining professional advice should be encouraged from the beginning. It should be remembered that in a compulsory purchase environment, negotiations take place between a purchaser with the powers of the State, and an unwilling seller, whose normal negotiating rights have been removed.
 81. Practitioners whose livelihoods and career choices are dependent on the viability of their work and the associated fee income, both in terms of levels and cashflow, can face significant stress if these commercial issues are not recognised and properly resolved in a timely and effective way. This is further compounded when acting for an affected party who is also under pressure. Ultimately practitioners can choose to leave the sector, whereas the affected parties cannot.
 82. Acquiring authorities should be more up front in terms of giving cost undertakings and should not use a refusal to agree reasonable costs in order to block affected parties' access to professional support and advice.
 83. Acquiring authorities could consider agreeing hourly rates and scopes of work for early advice with independent surveyors/solicitors/forensic accountants, which they can signpost for affected parties. They should provide FAQs when serving notices to help inform affected parties as to what their options are, perhaps providing access to mental health support as part of the compulsory purchase process.
 84. There may need to be an acknowledgement that no scheme is ever going to be without any challenges to mental health, but measures can be put in place to mitigate them. We have learned from good examples that front loading genuine engagement with parties potentially affected by compulsory purchase can have significant benefits, both financially for the proposed scheme and for the well-being of all concerned. This is reinforced by the latest MHCLG Guidance.
 85. A strong CPA community should be there to encourage others to join the sector and provide a backbone of support for individuals throughout their career.
 86. A lot of work has commenced on the reform of compulsory purchase law and the Law Commission has been tasked with considering how the law should be consolidated and refined to make it fit for our current time. Any proposals accepted will need to be

incorporated into primary and secondary legislation. Potential mental health impacts should be taken into consideration insofar as they are relevant.

87. Government guidance is updated from time to time and in doing so, there is an expectation that even within the limitations of current legislation, there is a need to recognise and mitigate for mental health impacts.
88. The CPA, for its part, is committed to ensuring that its own working groups, including those developing and reviewing reform recommendations, will consider potential mental health impacts and address this directly in their consultation responses. This will also be a factor taken into account in the peer reviews of the CPA's working groups' reports and recommendations.
89. The UK is not alone in the use of compulsory purchase powers, with other jurisdictions having similar and other issues to those addressed in this report. We can learn from each other's experiences and processes, to help develop better outcomes for all stakeholders.

ROLE OF THE HSE & OTHERS

90. The HSE has developed a ten-year business plan to tackle workplace stress. The HSE is clear that *"Employers have a legal duty to protect workers from stress at work by doing a risk assessment and acting on it. This is the same duty you have to protect people from other health and safety risks."*⁸
91. In this context it is worth noting that the responsibilities of organisations extend wider than their employees, to stakeholders and those that they do business with or otherwise impact.
92. The Coroner at the Inquest into Ruth Perry's death (a headteacher who died by suicide in 2023) concluded⁹ that a critical Ofsted inspection 'contributed' to her death. Ofsted's own 'Big Listen' consultation, which involved with thousands of teachers, parents and children, found that Ofsted's culture created feelings of stress, anxiety and apprehension among leaders and staff.
93. The HSE focus and the conclusion reached regarding Ruth Perry's suicide has potential ramifications for our sector. The relationship between a body with statutory powers and someone that those powers are directly impacting, has distinct similarities with the compulsory purchase impacts and should not be ignored.
94. The CPA's survey identified that employees working in the compulsory purchase space are experiencing distress. As such, it would seem clear that the HSE will consider that employers have a responsibility to mitigate that risk. Going forward, the personal and financial stress that affected parties are put under needs to be appropriately addressed and managed.

⁸ Health and Safety Executive, *Work-related stress and how to manage it*.

⁹ Regulation 28 Ruth Perry: *Prevention of future deaths report*. December 2023 Ref:2023-0524

ONGOING ROLE OF THE CPA

95. The CPA is made up predominantly of property, legal and planning professionals. We are not mental health experts, nor do we aspire to be. Already, many play a wider pastoral role, but the CPA is capable of showing leadership in using its training expertise and knowledge of the process, combined with those that understand mental health, to provide skills to assist with identifying and offering mental health mitigation strategies.
96. The CPA can bring employers together to develop protections for their businesses and their staff; far better than having prescription from those that do not understand our sector.
97. The CPA can work with relevant Government Departments and the Law Commission to assist in developing better processes and behaviours, to achieve better outcomes for all stakeholders.
98. The next steps will involve CPA members considering what resources would best assist them in dealing with the challenges now faced; and how these might be provided for. It is anticipated that this will include training, education and web-based resources and links to specialist support providers.
99. The CPA and others have identified the importance of the work required and changes needed to bring about better, safer outcomes, when dealing with a tool as powerful and critical for regeneration and vital infrastructure as compulsory purchase. We have seen the seeds of change are starting to germinate; we now need to see significant step changes.
100. The goal must be a process that is more economic to deliver, more user friendly to administer, and better protects those whose lives are being directly affected, in the wider public interest.
101. There are undoubtedly schemes and parties who have already established, and are developing, good practices that better respect mental health impacts. These need to be identified, shared and promoted through training programmes to drive the principles of best practice.
102. Additionally, this could come in the form of legislative change, as well as through Codes of Conduct and Professional Statements from regulatory bodies. But it could also come in the simple form of better behaviours and more consideration of impacts, in our day-to-day interactions.
103. Ultimately, every reader of this report can make a difference, and we are all being encouraged to do just that, however big or small the intervention. Ideas and positive actions will be welcomed by the CPA.

JUNE 2025

APPENDIX – EXAMPLE CPA MEMBER OBSERVATIONS

The following are key examples of expressed concern from members of the CPA, grouped by impact and relevance to land owners and / or advisors:

Specific to claimants

- *Claimants can be dispossessed of their land and the rights to it in advance of agreeing compensation, and all the while, their ability to emotionally 'move on' is frustrated. The London Olympics compensation claims took up to 14 years to be settled after some were dispossessed of their land, and 8 years after the project was completed. This creates a huge disruption to a person's life. Ditto a business. In a modern world, this should not be allowed.*
- *It's an uncomfortable (and perhaps intolerable) fact that distress caused is not compensated, only the loss of rights and interests in the land. We are not here to take a stance on this, but the fact is frequently hard to explain to someone facing eviction from their property, the collapse of their marriage or business, and puts any discussions on a poor footing.*
- *Regeneration schemes seek to take out dilapidated and run down areas – to rejuvenate communities. The people most likely to be affected are ethnic minorities, the poor and least educated groups who are located there simply because it's where they can afford to work/live. English may not be their primary language; they may well be poorly educated and have very different cultural values.*
- *Linear schemes (pipes, lines and transport systems) can run through rural and urban landscapes. The route can capture prime real estate, brownfield or heavily compromised land. It's scheme specific, but affected parties can range from farmers, landowners, investors and landlords of property portfolios, but also those mentioned in the previous bullet.*
- *No joined-up thinking from AAs – a claimant receiving over 50 schedule 2 notices. At another farm, they got 37 compulsory purchase notices on one farm.*
- *In property development, regeneration and the delivery of infrastructure, there is an unfortunate disparity between the levels of care provided to great crested newts and other protected species compared to human beings. Indeed, human remains in burial grounds are afforded greater care than those living and working the land nearby. This is especially true when it comes to the treatment of those caught up with a compulsory purchase acquisition.*
- *Families potentially need to uproot their schools, their jobs, their friendship groups, their economic stability for something completely different. The scheme is likely to destroy the community in which they live, and they must go and find another one. It's like emigrating – with a family. Really scary and uncertain, and starting afresh; and potentially without compensation payments agreed or paid.*
- *People want reassurance, respect, and to be understood.*

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- *A particular difficulty for claimants is there's no release, there's no finishing work at whatever time and going home and doing something else. You're living, breathing, working within the situation that's happening.*
- *Compulsory purchase is a unique process. For many affected parties unless you've seen it or been through it before it's very difficult to understand and appreciate the devastation on peoples' lives.*

Specific to advisors

- *Should negotiators understand those communities (should there be a recruitment drive as the Police have done, to involve ethnic groups into the AA workforce?)*
- *AA advisors can see the impact they are causing claimants – senior management never get to see this. Many ground staff and their consultants step into a pastoral role over and above their job. They are neither paid nor qualified to do this. Many advisors end up damaged as well; and frequently leave the industry*
- *But in government projects AAs carry an additional burden – the demands and expectations from Ministers, Politicians, civil servants, and Main Stream Media and social media, and from the national audit office. There is also the massive levels of governance, they lose the ability to empathise and engage.*

Relevant to both claimants and advisors

- *How do you negotiate compensation when the claimant understands Shia Law?*
- *Disenfranchisement, alienation and a clash of cultures are not unusual.*
- *There was a face to the AA. They engaged. They shared information. They worked together on finding solutions that worked for both sides.*
- *"everything is dealt with in a sort of in a vacuum".*
- *claimants are walking out from meetings, unable to cope with their emotions and the impacts on their existence*
- *They can't engage and speak at meetings.*
- *Shotguns have been taken away from farmers.*
- *People have had to be talked off railway bridges.*
- *Good, robust, happy people being ground into the dirt. One person collapsed in front of an advisor.*

- *Rational people simply can't make decisions without facts. And those that do may find such decisions are like building a house in sand. You need firm foundations to make quality decision*
- *The turnover of AA staff is such that you can never build up relationships between the AA and the claimants. Previous staff negotiated, made concessions and promises that are all too frequently are not carried over to their successors. It means time wasting and revisiting prior agreements that may not be subsequently agreed. It's so debilitating on all the parties concerned.*
- *Not engaging, acquiring authorities are ticking the box that they've met with the landowner.*
- *When I worked for a local authority we did all our own negotiations and never used external consultants. I think as a result we were much more understanding because we were the ones that were going into people's houses and we were the ones going into the commercial properties, so you understood what people were going through more.*
- *Interpersonal dialog, in person is much more useful to be in the same room so that you can understand and see where people are coming from and gain some rapport.*

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Affected party	An owner of an interest in land that is affected by a scheme
CPO	Compulsory Purchase Order
Coroner	A judicial officer responsible for investigation deaths in certain circumstances.
Hope value	The value over and above existing use in expectation of a better future planning use.
HS2	High Speed Two (HS2) Ltd
HSE	The Health and Safety Executive
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
Net zero	The point at which emissions of carbon dioxide from human activity are balanced by the removal of carbon emissions from the atmosphere.
NHS	National Health Service
Notice to treat	A notice given by an acquiring authority compelling a party to negotiate to sell their interest in land.
Safeguarding	The protection provided by the relevant Secretary of State on land preventing planning consents being granted thereon by a Local Planning Authority without reference to the Secretary of State and regard to a proposed scheme.
Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber)	The Tribunal to which compulsory purchase compensation cases are referred in order to have a claimant's entitlement to compensation determined, if it has not been settled by negotiation.
Vesting	The process by which an ownership of an interest in land is taken from an owner and that ownership is transferred to the acquiring authority