

Press release: Man found with Class A drugs in ear has sentence increased

A man found by police to be in possession of cocaine – including some within his ear – has had his sentence increased after intervention by the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland QC MP.

Klevis Drazhi, 20, was pulled over by police on Saturday 19th January after encroaching into a cycle lane. When officers asked for his driving licence and insurance, Drazhi handed over a false Albanian licence and a mobile phone, displaying a text message about a post code.

Officers noticed a small, white parcel concealed within the offender's ear. After a search of the car, officers uncovered 11 wraps of white powder later confirmed to have a presence of cocaine – and £1305 cash.

In interview, Drazhi claimed he was coerced into supplying drugs by a member of the Albanian mafia. He also admitted to illegally entering the UK on the back of a lorry.

Drazhi was originally sentenced to 11 months imprisonment at Inner London Crown Court. The Court of Appeal today raised that to 30 months.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General said:

“Clearly, the original sentence should have been within a higher band. I am pleased the Court of Appeal has decided to increase the offender's sentence, which reflects the severity of his crime.”

Press release: UK economy delivering record employment

The UK jobs market has continued to grow with 457,000 more people in work in February compared to last year.

Press release: UK economy delivering

record employment

New figures published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show the employment rate has never been higher at 76.1%, while unemployment remains at its lowest rate since the 1970s at 3.9%.

Employment rate remains at a joint record high

There are over 1.1 million fewer unemployed people than in 2010, with youth unemployment level almost halved in that time.

Employment Minister Alok Sharma welcomed the figures from the ONS which also showed wages outpacing inflation for 13 months in a row, with real wages growing by 1.6% on the year.

Minister of State for Employment Alok Sharma said:

“The UK jobs market continues to go from strength to strength, proving the underlying resilience of the British economy.

“But we must not take this for granted. We need to work urgently to get behind a Brexit deal that protects this jobs record and gives employers the certainty to continue to invest in their workforce and boost wages.

“With more people in work than ever before, it is welcome news that wages are continuing to rise at their fastest rate in a decade.

“And by increasing the living wage and personal tax allowance for 2019, this government is putting more money in people’s pocket, benefiting millions of families across the country.”

The government has made more changes to the tax system for 2019 to ensure people are keeping more of what they earn.

From April, working parents and disabled people will be able to earn an extra £1,000 a year before their Universal Credit starts to reduce. This change will see 2.4 million families keep up to an extra £630 per year of what they earn.

It will remain at 57.95 pence per litre across the UK. Fuel duty has been frozen for the ninth successive year, saving the average car driver £1,000.

From 1 April 2019 people will be able to claim up to £59,200 annually through the Access to Work scheme to help pay for additional support that they may need in the workplace. This can include workplace adaptations, assistive technology, transport and interpreters.

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Press release: Suffragan Bishop of Southampton: 16 April 2019

Queen approves the nomination of the Reverend Canon Deborah Sellin as Suffragan Bishop of Southampton.

Statement to parliament: Economic Secretary statement: financial assistance for Ireland

In December 2010, the UK agreed to provide a bilateral loan of £3.2 billion as part of a €67.5 billion international assistance package for Ireland. The loan was disbursed in 8 tranches. The final tranche was drawn down on 26 September 2013. Ireland has made interest payments on the loan every six months since the first disbursement.

On 15 April, in line with the agreed repayment schedule, HM Treasury received a total payment of £407,843,097.02 from Ireland. This comprises the repayment of £403,370,000 in principal and £4,473,097.02 in accrued interest.

As required under the Loans to Ireland Act 2010, HM Treasury provided a [Statutory Report to Parliament](#) on 1 April covering the period from 1 October to 31 March 2019. The Report set out details of future payments up to the final repayment on 26 March 2021. The government continues to expect the loan to be repaid in full and on time.

The next Statutory Report will cover the period from 1 April to 30 September 2019. HM Treasury will report fully on all repayments received during this period in the Report.

The Government will inform Parliament of the repayment through a Written Ministerial Statement following its return from recess.