

Press release: Foreign Secretary travels to France for G7 meeting

Today (5 April) the Foreign Secretary will be in Dinard, France for a meeting with his counterparts from G7 countries and the EU. During the summit the Foreign Secretary will discuss issues ranging from cyber security and foreign interference in democracies, to countering trafficking in the Sahel and standing up to Russian aggression.

The Foreign Secretary will discuss the latest Brexit developments and call on his European colleagues to support a further extension of Article 50 as set out by the Prime Minister.

Mr Hunt will also have discussions with partners on the UK's campaign to raise the issue of media freedom up the global agenda to ensure a safer environment for journalists to report safely and freely across the world.

Speaking ahead of the meeting, Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said:

The UK's involvement in the G7 is vital for our collective security and prosperity as we seek to protect the rules-based international system – from standing strong against hostility from Russia, encouraging China to participate as a responsible international partner, to tackling threats from cyber-attacks and terrorism.

The UK is committed to playing a leading role on the world stage. Be in no doubt that once Brexit has happened the UK will remain a global power, and we will continue to work closely with our partners to tackle global challenges.

Further information

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Jeremy Hunt to attend Foreign Ministers' meeting of G7 nations in Dinard, France on 5 April 2019.

News story: Government calls on shopworkers for views on violence at work

The [call is open for 12 weeks](#) and asks organisations and individuals to contribute to the government's understanding of the problem. Responses are particularly encouraged from retailers, trade associations and unions, as well as those working in the retail industry.

The most recent Home Office Commercial Victimisation Survey estimated that in 2017, workers from the wholesale and retail sector suffered around 510,000 incidents of assaults and threats, more than twice the number recorded in 2016.

Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability, Victoria Atkins, said:

Shop staff play an important role in our communities, and it is clearly unacceptable that they should experience violent or abusive behaviour.

Everyone has the right to feel safe at work and I know these crimes can have a significant impact on victims as well as retailers, customers and the wider community.

I'd encourage anyone who has been affected to share their experience to help shape our response to this issue.

Helen Dickinson, Chief Executive of the British Retail Consortium said:

Violence against employees is one of the most pressing issues retailers face. These crimes impact on the skilled, passionate and determined individuals who make the industry such a vibrant place; their families and loved ones; and the communities to which they contribute.

That is why it is heartening to see the government move so fast to publish this call for evidence, showing how important an issue they think it is.

The call for evidence seeks data relating to violence and abuse toward shop workers, including the extent to which incidents are linked to age-restricted sales of products like cigarettes and alcohol.

It also asks for feedback on prevention and support, enforcement and the criminal justice system. This includes the effectiveness of the law and any

barriers to reporting these crimes.

The Home Office will consider the evidence and publish a response as swiftly as possible. The call for evidence follows a Ministerial roundtable with key industry leaders to discuss what can be done.

[Minister for Crime plans to protect shop workers from violence](#)

It is also supported by a package of measures to help raise awareness and encourage reporting of these crimes. This includes £50,000 of funding from the Home Office to the Association of Convenience Stores to run a communications campaign targeting the public and retail staff.

Association of Convenience Stores chief executive James Lowman said:

We welcome this call for evidence and we encourage retailers and shop workers to share their experiences.

Along with the campaign we are running with the Home Office to encourage these crimes to be reported, this call for evidence shows that Ministers want to face this problem head on.

Retailers should take this opportunity to tell their story and press for a better response to these crimes from the police and courts.

The government has also published [new guidance](#) to help ensure businesses [have a voice in the criminal justice system](#).

[Press release: Charity Commission opens inquiry into care charity following Coroner's report](#)

The Charity Commission has opened a statutory inquiry into Richmond Psychosocial Foundation International ([registered charity number 1116206](#)), a charity with objects to provide therapeutic care for adults suffering from mental health and other problems. Its activities include the provision of residential care.

Following the death in May 2016 of Sophie Bennett, a young woman in the charity's care, an inquest was opened. In February 2019, that inquest found that leadership and oversight of the charity's board was "grossly

inadequate". The Coroner identified serious failings by the trustees to keep their beneficiaries safe from harm.

After the publication of the Coroner's report, the charity regulator swiftly opened a statutory inquiry on 5 March 2019. Whilst other statutory agencies lead on the safety and quality of care activities provided by the charity, the Charity Commission's focus is on governance and compliance under charity law.

The inquiry is considering:

- the trustees' compliance with their duties and responsibilities under charity law; in particular their oversight and governance of safeguarding arrangements
- the trustees' response to the Coroner's report into the death of Sophie Bennett and the governance changes that are necessary as a result.

The Charity Commission has worked closely with the Adult Social Services team at the London Boroughs of Richmond upon Thames and Wandsworth and the Care Quality Commission. As the relevant statutory agencies on safeguarding and the quality of care provision respectively, they are overseeing the safety and wellbeing of the vulnerable people who are using the charity's services. The Charity Commission inquiry will continue to liaise closely with these bodies as necessary.

Michelle Russell, Director of Investigations, Monitoring and Enforcement at the Charity Commission said:

This Coroner's report made for highly distressing reading. Those that run charities must put the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable people in their care first at all times.

The Coroner found that governance failings at the charity directly contributed to Sophie's death. We want to see the charity address those failings as a matter of urgency.

The opening of this inquiry reflects the seriousness of the Coroner's findings and our concerns.

It is the Commission's policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were. Reports of previous inquiries are available on [GOV.UK](https://gov.uk).

Ends.

Notes to editors

1. The Commission has been engaging with the charity on a number of matters since 2016, however scrutiny of the trustees' safeguarding governance and decision-making had to be placed on hold pending action by other

agencies, including the inquest.

2. Sophie Bennett died at Lancaster Lodge, a residential home run by Richmond Psychosocial Foundation International. The last resident moved out during the summer of 2016.
3. The charity currently runs a residential home and supported living service collectively known as the 'White House'. At its last inspection of this service, the Care Quality Commission, found that the service was "good" in each of the 5 key outcomes. The inquiry is liaising with relevant authorities who are responsible for ensuring that there are no current risks to the charity's beneficiaries.
4. The Commission is not a statutory safeguarding agency. Further information on the Commission's remit in relation to safeguarding can be found on [GOV.UK](https://gov.uk).
5. Section 46 of the Charities Act 2011 gives the Commission the power to institute inquiries. The opening of an inquiry gives the Commission access to a range of investigative, protective and remedial legal powers.
6. The Charity Commission is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see the [about us](#) page on GOV.UK.
7. The Care Quality Commission is the independent regulator of all health and social care services in England. For more information please contact their press office on: 020 7448 9401.
8. For more information from London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Adult Social Services please contact their press office on: 020 8487 5182.

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Regulator extends regulatory scrutiny after inquest finds governance failings led to death in care