

Press release: Government Minister to teach London teens the law

A group of teenagers at Pimlico Academy will be taught about the law by Solicitor General, Robert Buckland QC MP, and lawyers from the Government Legal Department (GLD) as part of the Young Citizens Legal Experts in Schools programme.

The programme has already delivered a series of legal sessions aimed at increasing young people's awareness and understanding of the law, developing listening and communication skills and raising aspirations and confidence.

The workshop takes place on 6 March, and will focus on 'Youth Justice' which outlines some of the simpler aspects of the law relating to young people and criminal behaviour, and 'Applying the Law' which looks at applying the law in practice.

The Solicitor will join government lawyers to discuss the general procedures surrounding arrest and questioning of young people by the police. He will also participate in a group session with the 13-14 year olds to discuss how young people should be treated by the police, and the courts over an offence of criminal damage in which they were both involved. The session will finish by looking at the varieties of punishment.

Speaking ahead of the event, the Solicitor General said:

Young people who know about the law are more aware of their rights and responsibilities which can range from knowing whether you're entitled to a refund in a shop or whether you've been a victim of discrimination.

The sessions are valuable in helping them develop a legal foundation which they will be able to use throughout their lives. Public legal education can have a practical and beneficial effect on young people's lives, as well as having a positive effect on our legal system.

Tom Franklin, Chief Executive of Young Citizens said:

The law touches everyone's lives. It's vital that every young person learns the basics of how the law works – to know their rights and responsibilities, but also to take an active part in society, as citizens. Young Citizens' Legal Experts in Schools programme involves pupils meeting lawyers, often for the first time, to discuss how the law works.

It's fantastic to have the support of the Solicitor General for

this programme. It will help the pupils to see the connection between democracy, the rule of law within society, and their own individual rights and responsibilities.

Notes

Young Citizens helps young people become active, engaged and motivated citizens, who are able to contribute positively to their communities – whether those communities are local, national or global.

Young Citizens work ranges from projects where young people learn about the legal justice system to empowering children to take action on social issues they care about most. They also empower teachers and volunteering professionals with specialist training and resources for classroom delivery.

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Solicitor General will join a legal education session at Pimlico Academy

Speech: Intellectual Property Minister speaks of the importance of ensuring UK IP remains some of the best in the world

It's a pleasure to be here. M.I.P. is a valued resource across the world and it's a privilege to speak at today's conference.

I've only been in post for 3 months. And I'm in a slightly unusual situation, in that I'm a Minister in 2 departments – the Business Department and the Department for Education.

This means my poor staff are forced to endure something of a nomadic existence in Whitehall. It also means I have a diverse brief – ranging from technology, to universities and space exploration.

Anyone in government – or anyone honest – will tell you that finding your way

through a new Ministerial brief is a daunting task.

But not long into the job I had a eureka moment: I realised that one element of my portfolio united all the others.

That intellectual property is the nerve centre of my role; it links research to economic growth, it links the arts to the sciences. And it underpins everything we are trying to achieve across the economy as a whole.

And that means this is an area we have to get right. Which is why I'm committed to protecting and strengthening our IP system

To helping it adjust to the changes we see around us

To talking to experts like you to understand how we can stay ahead

And, ultimately, to ensuring that UK IP remains some of the best in the world.

The importance of IP

It costs well over a billion pounds, on average, to bring a new drug to market. Hollywood films typically cost in excess of 60 million dollars to produce.

What would be the motivation, let alone the justification, if the fruits of your labours weren't your own?

This simple principle demonstrates why IP is central to our plans for the economy.

Last year we published our industrial strategy. A key aim of which is to encourage innovation across the economy.

We're increasing R&D spend to 2.4% of GDP. And we're encouraging the commercialisation of research in our fantastic universities.

This simply wouldn't be achievable without a strong IP system.

Last week I met representatives from Stanford and MIT. Both extraordinary centres of innovation. So much so that venture capitalists are buying-up properties adjacent to campus to ensure their staff are close to the action.

It was clear in that meeting that IP protection is vital if those universities are to retain the talent they need to thrive.

I was recently privileged enough to visit the British Library IP archives and see the original patent of the spinning Jenny – one of the sparks of the industrial revolution.

It was an apt reminder that IP underpinned the economic changes of the past. Just as it will today.

If we are to keep the best minds working in Britain. If we are to attract inward investment. And if we are to build the world's most innovative economy, a strong IP system is key.

The UK IP Framework

Fortunately, the UK has a deserved reputation as a great place to develop and protect IP.

Just last month the US Chamber of Commerce Global IP Centre ranked our IP framework second out of 50 jurisdictions, beaten only by the USA. And we're ranked first in the world for patents by the Taylor Wessing Global IP Index.

But to maintain this position we need to be able to adapt and respond to the changes we see around us.

Before I was a politician, I was an historian.

And what history shows us is that intellectual property evolves, shaped by changes in, politics, technology and markets.

In the seventeenth century as Parliament and the monarchy tussled for power, control of patents was transferred from the King to the courts.

2 centuries later, we saw the first major international IP agreements, in response to the expansion of communication technologies and the explosion of global trade.

Today, once again, we're in the midst of significant technological and political change. And IP must adapt.

Innovation, technology and IP

Firstly, as the technological revolution continues to unfold, we need to ensure we understand its impact on IP.

So I'm pleased to announce that this summer we will host conference with the World Intellectual Property Organization, considering the implications of artificial intelligence – or AI – for IP.

But we also need to help our IP systems to respond to the changes we see around us

Both so it can deal with the issues raised by technologies like block chain and AI, whilst supporting innovation.

And so our Intellectual Property Office – or IPO – remains at the cutting edge.

So, last year, for example, we announced research funding to look at how AI can modernise the process of filing Intellectual Property Rights.

And we continue to talk to experts.

I've personally visited our IPO offices in both London and Newport to meet with staff and listen to their plans for the future.

And later this year I'll organise roundtables with key IP stakeholders to understand your views on what we need to do to stay ahead – I hope I'll see many of you there.

Brexit

But for a nation like ours, with a long and proud history of trading with the world, IP will always be as much an international as a domestic matter.

And of course, one of the complex international challenges the UK has faced in recent years is our withdrawal from the European Union.

This has created a period of huge uncertainty. But, throughout, our priority has been to provide clarity. And to ensure a smooth and effective IP system, regardless of the outcome of the negotiations and parliamentary wrangling.

So although we are focused on delivering the deal negotiated with the EU, we have prepared for all eventualities – including no deal.

I've personally taken 4 Statutory Instruments through the Commons in the past few weeks – one of them just yesterday. These ensure we have a fully functioning IP statute book when the UK leaves the EU.

So I am confident that we will continue to have one of the world's best IP regimes, whatever the outcome. And that the transition will be a smooth one.

International work

As a foundation of global trade, IP plays a crucial role as we leave the EU and forge new relations across the globe.

So we are encouraging consistent and effective systems to help British firms do business internationally

Particularly, through our international attaché network, which operates around the world – from India to Brazil. Promoting respect for intellectual property. Encouraging cross-border collaboration. And helping UK businesses.

Last year alone the network helped British businesses resolve issues worth almost one hundred million pounds. And now we are expanding the network, strengthening our international reach.

We have a new post in North America. And we are increasing resources in China and South East Asia – helping UK firms to make the most of these expanding and lucrative markets.

And I will be visiting China myself next month to discuss important IP issues with my Chinese counterparts, and others.

Conclusion

When I took over this job at the beginning of the year, I was aware that my predecessors had dubbed it the best in government. 8 weeks in, I have to agree.

We live in exciting times. Times of technological revolution and global shifts.

I am immensely proud of the IPO – the work they do, their ability to adapt, and their appetite to succeed in a complex and changing environment.

And I am well aware that this work is enhanced by many of you here – our expert partners – sharing insights and ideas. I'm very grateful to you all and I want us to keep talking.

Because while there are undoubtedly further challenges ahead, I am confident that, together, we will continue to provide one of the world's best IP systems.

Encouraging innovation and investment, attracting the best talent, and, ultimately, creating the economy our country needs.

Thank you.

[News story: Government sets out key measures to tackle violence against women and girls](#)

Home Office launches refresh of cross-government violence against women and girls strategy.

[News story: Government sets out key measures to tackle violence against women and girls](#)

Ahead of International Women's Day, the Home Office has published its refreshed [violence against women and girls \(VAWG\) strategy](#) in order to

provide further support to victims and survivors of violent crime.

The refreshed action plan, which was first launched in 2016, sets out new measures to help protect women and girls.

This includes a cross-sector, end-to-end review into how rape and sexual violence cases are handled across the criminal justice system.

Other policies among the 54 commitments being made are pledges to:

- commission research into the connection between pornography and violence against women
- develop further measures to support LGBT victims
- explore issues of 'online flashing' and consider options for next steps
- consider the impact of alcohol on violence against women and girls

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

Violence against women and girls strikes at the heart of our families, friendships and communities and it is our responsibility to bring light, justice and support to victims and survivors.

It is right that in the week of International Women's Day, we keep looking at how we can build on the excellent work done so far. Following campaigns such as #MeToo and #TimesUp that have highlighted the sheer scale of incidents, we, as a society, must do all we can to tackle these horrendous crimes and attitudes.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Any incident of violence or abuse against a woman or girl is a cowardly act that will not be tolerated.

We must do all we can, across government and society, to support victims and bring perpetrators to justice.

The VAWG strategy is an ambitious programme of reform, which has been backed by £100 million of funding, in order to support victims, bring perpetrators to justice, and prevent these crimes happening in the first place.

A key commitment in the refresh is for the government to conduct a review into how the criminal justice system responds to rape and serious sexual offences.

The review will look at the entire criminal justice system – from police report to conviction or acquittal in court – and make recommendations for change to ensure that victims have the confidence that if they report their crimes, action will be taken.

The Ministry of Justice will be establishing a sub-group of the Criminal Justice Board which will oversee the review and inform the discussions of the Inter-Ministerial Group on Violence Against Women and Girls, as well as a stakeholder advisory group to closely involve victims' groups will be created.

Victims Minister Edward Argar, said:

Victims of rape and sexual violence show immense bravery in coming forward – they must be protected and supported, and get the justice they deserve.

To address victim concerns we will thoroughly review how the justice system deals with these cases – seeking views from charities and all those affected by these crimes.

In addition, we have already nearly doubled funding for victim support services since 2013, as well as providing a 10% increase for specialist sexual abuse services.

The refresh details the work government has done since 2016 to transform the response to violence against women and girls. This includes:

- launching the £17 million VAWG service transformation fund, which funds 41 local areas to support prevention and partnership
- consulting on the introduction of stalking protection civil orders and supporting Sarah Wollaston's Private Member's Bill, which today reaches report stage in the House of Lords
- providing £42 million to support domestic abuse services including refuge provision and other accommodation-based services
- introducing an age rating scheme with the music industry to ensure music videos are age classified to help tackle harmful gender norms
- delivering a £4 million national female genital mutilation prevention programme in partnership with NHS England
- publishing updated guidance on the domestic violence disclosure scheme, also known as Clare's law, that enables potential victims to ask for information about a new partner

Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner Dame Vera Baird QC said:

I welcome the refreshed VAWG strategy and particularly the funding announced to back it. VAWG victims make up over half of high harm vulnerable and repeat victims in the criminal justice system and rarely emerge from it pleased with what has happened to them.

I therefore particularly welcome the cross sector end to end review of how rape and sexual offences are conducted, from reporting to police right through to the end of the court process. It's a cause of worry that the number of sex offenders referred by police for prosecutions has dropped and the numbers prosecuted has fallen even

more. This is all in the face of thousands more serious sexual complaints. This mismatch is capable of robbing any victim of the confidence to report a sexual assault. Rapists are usually serial offenders and will continue until they are made to stop and so there is also a serious wider risk to public safety from this concern.

Rachel Kryz, Co-director of End Violence Against Women Coalition, said:

We are pleased to see that there will be a review of the criminal justice system's response to rape and sexual offences. Despite a huge increase in the numbers of women reporting rape to the police over the last 5 years, there has been an alarming recent collapse in the rate of cases being charged.

Women who report rape can be made to feel it is they who are under investigation and on trial and we need to turn this around. A close examination of every stage of the process is a good place to start. We are keen to work with the Criminal Justice Board, as it oversees this review, and help ensure that it ultimately increases women's access to justice.