

Speech: Judges annual pay review

2018/19: David Gauke blog

Our judiciary is recognised and respected both at home and around the world for its integrity and independence.

Every day, in courts and tribunals across the country, judges deliver justice without fear or favour and, in doing so, uphold the rule of law on which our society is founded.

Beyond their fundamental role, the quality and dependability of our judiciary is also critical to maintaining the UK's thriving legal services sector, worth around £24 billion to our economy and attracting international business to the UK.

I believe that in order to continue to have a world-class judiciary, we need to be able to retain and recruit high-calibre and highly experienced judges.

With that in mind, and following recommendations made by the Senior Salaries Review Body (SSRB) in their annual report, I am pleased today to announce a 2% pay increase for members of the judiciary for 2018/19 – the biggest pay rise for judges in nearly 10 years.

This is in line with the pay awards announced recently for other vital public servants – such as the police and doctors – and strikes the right balance between reward and affordability.

It has been reported that judges could be awarded significantly higher pay increases – some as high as 32%. This recommendation, along with many others, was made by the SSRB as part of a major review of judges pay, quite separate to the annual pay increase I am announcing today. No decisions have yet been made, but we are giving careful consideration to the recommendations put forward.

This major review, published in full today, has considered in depth the total reward package for judges – including the impact of recent pensions changes – and our ability to continue to recruit and retain the brilliant legal minds required to carry out this role.

This Government is acutely aware of the recruitment challenges we face at senior levels of the judiciary. That is precisely why my Department asked for this review to be carried out.

We are grateful for the work that has been undertaken and will give careful consideration to the issues that have been raised. I recognise the importance of ensuring the reward package for judges is sufficiently attractive to enable us to attract excellent candidates to judicial office.

I will make a further announcement when I am in position to set out in full the government's response to the major review.

Statement to Parliament: Crossrail delay

On 31 August 2018, Crossrail Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Transport for London (TfL), announced a delay to the planned opening of the Elizabeth Line.

Discussions between TfL and government are underway as to how any additional funding will be provided, with London – as the primary beneficiary of Crossrail – bearing any additional costs via a financing arrangement.

TfL and the Department for Transport have commissioned an independent review of Crossrail's governance and a separate review on Crossrail's finance and commercial position.

Today (26 October 2018), as an interim measure, we are announcing that £350 million of short term repayable financing will be made available to the Mayor for the year 2018/19. This will ensure that full momentum is maintained behind Crossrail.

This project is already delivering benefits for the whole of the UK through its cross-country supply chain and its UK built train fleet. When open, Crossrail will be transformative and carry up to 200 million passengers a year, delivering £42 billion of investment into the UK economy.

A further update will be provided once the discussions on the financing arrangements have concluded.

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Speech: UK-Ghana: Why our future matters more than our past

British Prime Minister Theresa May visited Africa in August and set out a very clear and ambitious new strategy for the UK's engagement with the Continent. This included a target for the UK to become Africa's largest investor in the G7. It is my job to deliver that new ambition here in Ghana, and we are expanding and reorienting our effort to do so.

In so many ways, Ghana is the natural partner for the UK. We are old and close friends that share a heritage, deep family links and a set of values around peace, stability and the importance of the rules-based international system. We work closely together in the UN and in the Commonwealth, as well as bilaterally across a full range of policy areas. But in President Nana Akufo-Addo's 'Ghana Beyond Aid' strategy, I also believe we have a shared vision of the future. For a longstanding partner in Ghana's development, like the UK – we have invested over £2bn of development assistance in Ghana over the last two decades – this is not about withdrawing our support for Ghana, but reorienting our partnership to more directly support sustainable economic development, job creation and expanding opportunities for trade and investment.

We have already started to do this, with the recent launch of our Jobs and Economic Transformation programme, which will help create 15,000 new jobs in Ghana and support skills development and capacity building in key sectors of the economy. We are also increasing the amount of development finance available to Ghana and other African countries, and making it easier to use – support from our UK Export Finance, for example, can now be accessed in cedis, removing exchange rate risks.

Last night, the UK's Minister for Africa Harriett Baldwin and Vice President

Dr Mahamudu Bawumia co-hosted the first meeting of the UK-Ghana Business Council – a high level forum which we will hold twice a year to drive forward this new, more strategic partnership. And today, I am delighted that Baroness Fairhead, our Minister for Trade and Export Promotion, is in Accra for the first day of the UK-Ghana Investment Summit. We are greatly honoured that the President will attend to give the keynote speech.

The Summit will bring over 50 UK companies to Ghana to discuss trade and investment opportunities with Ministers and government officials, and to build links with local private sector partners. Leveraging private sector involvement and building these international partnerships is a critical element in making 'Beyond Aid' a success. The UK wants to be Ghana's partner of choice, and we are working hard to bring the UK's world class quality, standards and expertise to help catalyse Ghana's economic transformation.

These are just the first steps in what we see as an enduring and long-term strategic partnership designed to maximise mutual prosperity – building on the past, but very much looking to the future.

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