

Press release: Appointments to the Board of the Environment Agency

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I am also thrilled that Gill and Lynne will be continuing to help us with meeting the challenges ahead.

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I am looking forward to working with John, Robert, Caroline and Judith on some of the greatest environmental challenges of our time. It was a highly competitive selection process and they will each bring a broad range of experience and expertise to the Environment Agency.

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News story: Sir John Kingman announced as Chair of UK Research and Innovation

- science, research and innovation is at the heart of the government's modern Industrial Strategy and John Kingman will play a key role in delivering the ambitious vision of UKRI
- through the Industrial Strategy the government will boost spending on research and development to 2.4% of GDP by 2027, the biggest ever increase in UK R&D spending

Business Secretary Greg Clark has today (Tuesday 16 January) announced that Sir John Kingman will take up the role of permanent chair of UKRI in April this year. Sir John has been interim chair since May 2016 and his appointment follows a fair and open competition.

With a combined budget of more than £6 billion, UKRI will be a major voice for research and innovation in the UK and globally, helping implement the government's ambitious [Industrial Strategy](#).

Boosting research and development (R&D) is key to the Industrial Strategy and the government has committed to the biggest ever increase in R&D investment to 2.4% of GDP by 2027, which could increase public and private R&D investment by as much as £80 billion over the next 10 years.

Commenting on his appointment, Sir John said:

I am thrilled to have been selected to be chair of UK Research and Innovation. This is a moment of exceptional opportunity – and responsibility – to make best possible use of the very large increases in science and innovation funding committed in the Industrial Strategy. In 18 months as interim chair, robust foundations have been laid for the new organisation: we have recruited a superb chief executive and executive team; a formidable Board; and exceptional new talent into key leadership roles at the research councils. It is a huge privilege to be given the opportunity to continue.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

Since May 2016 when Sir John Kingman was appointed the interim Chair, he has been central to the formation of UKRI. As we work to establish this new organisation, Sir John has worked tirelessly to develop UKRI's strategy and approach.

Research and development is at the heart of our modern Industrial Strategy, and UKRI will be the vehicle to ensure that we capitalise on innovation and work closely with industry and universities to ensure that we double down on our strengths and make the most of the opportunities in our world leading scientific and research base.

Sir John was appointed as Chair of UKRI on an interim basis in May 2016, to set up the new organisation in shadow form.

Sir John is also Group Chairman of Legal and General PLC. Until July 2016, Sir John was Second Permanent Secretary to the HM Treasury. Over the course of his HM Treasury career Sir John has had a sustained involvement in science and innovation funding and policy; in total he has worked on 5 Spending Reviews which prioritised science and innovation.

In 2004, John personally led the then government's 10 year framework for science and innovation. He has also been closely involved over many years in policymaking on R&D tax credits. In addition to his HM Treasury career, John has worked in the Group Chief Executive's office at BP, been a Lex columnist at the Financial Times and a Managing Director at Rothschild, the investment bank. He is a World Fellow of Yale University, a Trustee of the Royal Opera House and a member of the advisory committee for Jim O'Neill's review on antimicrobial resistance.

As announced in May 2016, in the government's higher education and research white paper, ['Success as a Knowledge Economy'](#), UKRI will be established as a single, strategic body that will bring together the 7 Research Councils, Innovate UK and the research funding from Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

UKRI will ensure that the UK maintains its world-leading research and innovation position by creating a system that maximises the contribution of each of the component parts and creates the best environment for research and innovation to flourish.

The post of Chair of UKRI is subject to a pre-appointment hearing by the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee. The Committee will consider this appointment in due course.

Press release: Professor Nick Hardwick responds to concerns about Worboys' case

I believe public bodies should be open to scrutiny and accountable for their decisions.

So, I would welcome a decision by the Lord Chancellor to judicially review the Parole Board in the Worboys case and we will not stand in the way of such a review taking place. I hope such a review will provide assurance that the Parole Board itself has acted in accordance with the law and the evidence.

Public concern about the Worboys case is completely understandable and it is right that the anguish of his victims should be heard.

The Parole Board considers nearly 25,000 cases a year. Almost every one of those cases involves horrible offences with victims' lives changed forever. There will be victims of offences that did not go to trial or result in a conviction and there will be others indirectly but painfully affected such as family members, witnesses and those who have to deal with the crime. The ripples from serious offences spread very wide.

That is the reality of the Parole Board's work.

For prisoners like Worboys, once they have served the 'tariff' or the punishment part of their sentence set by a judge, they will be referred to the Parole Board by the Secretary of State and the Board must then determine if they are safe to release. The test that Parole Board's 250 members must apply in deciding whether to release a prisoner is that 'it is no longer necessary for the protection of the public that they should be detained'; in other words, the burden is on the prisoner to demonstrate they are safe to release, not the panel to demonstrate they are too dangerous to do so.

The law governing the Parole Board's decisions is quite clear. We have to make decisions about future risk. We cannot re-assess the prisoner's guilt or innocence or whether the original sentence was appropriate even if we would like to do so. The decision about future risk will be informed both by evidence of how the prisoner has changed and the robustness of plans to manage him or her in the community.

I do not make decisions on individual cases, but I have observed many hearing and am struck by the careful and sensitive way panels make their decisions. Do they always get it right? No. Less than one per cent of those we release commits a serious further offence and each is a terrible incident. But I would not be honest if I pretended risk could be eliminated completely. Parole Board members need to be confident a prisoner will not reoffend – but they cannot be certain. If certainty is required that needs to be reflected in the length of the original sentence.

The Parole Board Rules prohibit the Parole Board from disclosing details of individual cases. I do not think this is right. Justice needs to be seen to be done. If the parole system is closed and secretive we cannot complain if people do not understand it.

I welcome the government's review of this area and hope it will be radical.

I don't say this will be easy. Some victims tell us they want to put the offence behind them and fear that opening the system up would put them through the media mill again and expose them to prurient public interest.. So, while looking at all the options we should proceed carefully and make sure we do not do more harm than good.

Although we are prohibited from revealing details of the Worboys case I will say something about the processes followed.

First, I share the concerns that victims say they were not kept informed or consulted about licence conditions.

The law says victims do not have a say in whether a prisoner is released on parole or not – that happens at the original trial when the tariff is set – but they should have an opportunity to ensure the panel understands the impact the offence had on them and have a say in the licence conditions that apply after release. They can make a written statement, attend the start of a hearing to read their statement in person or say nothing at all.

Other than receiving and carefully considering their statements, the Parole Board has no role in contacting or liaising with victims. That is undertaken by the Victim Contact Service, part of the National Probation Service, on behalf of the Secretary of State. The Parole Board sought and received assurance on a number of occasions that victims who wanted to make a victim statement had the opportunity to do so and were informed about the outcome of the hearing.

There are very serious allegations that some victims who should have been kept informed were not and victims and the public deserve to know exactly what happened. There should be an independent investigation by someone outside the Parole Board and Ministry of Justice into this specific issue and I call on the Secretary of State to initiate this.

As for Worboys' hearing itself, it was a three-member panel chaired by one of our most experienced women members. One of the other members was a parole board psychologist. The panel considered a dossier of 363 pages and heard evidence from four other psychologists, and prison and probations staff responsible for Worboys. The Secretary of State was represented at our request. Worboys himself was questioned in detail. The panel considered a written statement from one victim.

It is particularly concerning that other victims now state they did not have an opportunity to give their views. I know that some victims are frightened. The licence conditions are very detailed but can be varied. The probation service must now ensure that even at this stage victims have an opportunity

to have any concerns about licence conditions considered and should apply to the Parole Board for licence variations where this is appropriate.

Finally, let me say this. The Parole Board is in effect a court. We should be open to legal challenge but I hope when people think about it, they will agree it is right we resist political interference in our decisions. Like any court, the Parole Board members must make independent decisions in accordance with the law and on the basis of evidence. It would be a bad day for us all if people's rightful abhorrence of Worboys' crimes or even justified concern about a Parole Board decision allowed these basic principles of justice to be overturned.