

News story: Home Office sets out police pay award for 2017 to 2018

The government recognises the extraordinary efforts of the police over the past year, and in light of independent recommendations made by the [Police Remuneration Review Body \(PRRB\)](#) and the Senior Salaries Review Body (SSRB), we will award police officers a pay award worth a total of two per cent to each officer in 2017 to 2018.

This will consist of:

- a 1% increase to base pay for all ranks
- an additional one-off non-consolidated payment to officers at federated and superintending ranks
- a 1% increase to the London Weighting payment
- a 1% increase to the Dog Handlers' Allowance

Home Secretary Amber Rudd said:

The tireless work and contribution of police officers in responding to some of the most challenging situations our country has faced for a very long time has been extraordinary.

This award strikes a fair balance for police forces, officers and taxpayers. We want to reward and attract the very best police officers within the resources we have, whilst making the right decisions for the economy overall.

This award strikes a fair balance for police forces, officers and taxpayers. We believe it is affordable within the current police funding settlement. The independent pay review body and the police's independent inspectorate have both highlighted the potential for further efficiencies in the police, forces have increased their reserves from £1.4 billion in 2011 to £1.8 billion in 2016, and police spending has been protected in real terms since 2015.

Policing remains a very attractive career. Applications rates for police officer roles are high. For example, this summer, more than 1500 people applied for 300 Humberside police officer jobs.

Officers benefit from a competitive pay and benefits package. The starting salary is between £19,971 (no qualifications) and £23,124 for constables, rising to £38,382 within 7 years of joining.

Officers who have not reached to top of their pay scale receive annual incremental pay of at least 2% in addition to any annual pay awards depending on rank, experience and securing a satisfactory performance grading.

They are entitled to membership of a defined benefit pension scheme, which is

among the best available in the public or private sectors. Members benefit from employer contributions of 21.3% of their pay towards their pensions on top of their own contribution. All contributing members are able to take their pension by age 60, with the majority able to take a pension sooner.

The PRRB highlighted in its report the potential for further efficiencies to be made within policing.

Further information about police welfare, pay and wellbeing is available on the [Home Office media blog](#).

[Press release: Government ratifies Hague Convention on protecting cultural property](#)

The 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols are designed to protect cultural property from destruction and looting during armed conflict. These include monuments, archaeological sites, works of arts and important artefacts.

The move cements the UK's position as a world leader in cultural heritage protection and sends out a clear message on our commitment to protecting cultural property during conflict.

The Government introduced the legislation to ratify the Convention in the Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Act, which was passed into law in February 2017. The Government intends to bring the Act into force at the same time that the Convention and Protocols come into force for the UK.

The UK and France are the only permanent members of the UN Security Council to accede to both its Protocols.

Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism John Glen said:

The world has watched with dismay and horror in recent years at the wanton destruction of priceless historic artefacts and sites in war.

By ratifying the Hague Convention and both its Protocols, the UK underlines our absolute commitment to protecting cultural heritage, both here and across the globe.

The 1954 Hague Convention was set up following the massive destruction during

the Second World War. The UK chose not to ratify the Convention or accede to the First Protocol in 1954 as it considered, along with a number of other countries, that it did not provide an effective regime for the protection of cultural property. The adoption of the Second Protocol in 1999, which the UK was involved in negotiating, addressed these concerns and allowed the UK to announce its intention to ratify in 2004.

Ratification of the Convention builds on the Government's £30 million Cultural Protection Fund, which is helping protect and restore cultural heritage in global conflict zones.

Subject to confirmation by UNESCO, the Convention and Protocols will come into force in the UK on December 12, 2017.

Notice: PL17 8ER, Jamie Robert Hatch and Raymond Russell Hatch: environmental permit issued

The Environment Agency publish permits that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the permit, decision document for:

- Operator name: Jamie Robert Hatch and Raymond Russell Hatch
- Installation name: Kelly Bray Poultry Farm
- Permit number: EPR/YP3434HG/V005

Notice: ST21 6NX, Mr Robert Ainsworth and Mrs Anne Ainsworth: environmental permit issued

The Environment Agency publish permits that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the permit and decision document for:

- Operator name: Mr Robert Ainsworth and Mrs Anne Ainsworth
- Installation name: Mill Farm

Press release: Statement from the Culture Secretary on the proposed Sky plc / 21st Century Fox Inc. merger

Mr Speaker, I am here to give an update on the proposed merger between 21st Century Fox and Sky Plc, and my decision whether or not to refer the transaction for a full 6 month investigation by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA).

I should first remind the House that in my quasi-judicial role I must:

1. Come to a decision on the basis of relevant evidence;
2. Act independently in a process that is fair and impartial; and
3. Take my decision as promptly as is reasonably practicable.

I am committed to transparency and openness in this process and have been clear my decisions can only be influenced by facts, not opinions – and by the evidence, not who shouts the loudest.

Media Plurality

Turning first to the question of media plurality, I can confirm that none of the representations received have persuaded me to change my position. Accordingly, I can confirm my intention to make a referral on the media plurality ground to the CMA.

Representations

Turning now to commitment to broadcasting standards, over the summer my officials reviewed the almost 43 thousand representations received. A significant majority were campaign-inspired, arguing against the merger going ahead, but generally without providing new or further evidence or commenting on Ofcom's approach.

Overall, around 30 of the 43 thousand representations were substantive, raising potentially new evidence or commenting on Ofcom's approach. Almost all were related to the question of commitment to broadcasting standards.

In light of these representations I asked Ofcom to provide further advice and can I put on record my gratitude for Ofcom's efforts in responding to the questions raised.

I am, today, publishing the exchanges between my Department and Ofcom.

In these I sought clarification on:

1. The threshold Ofcom applied to its consideration of the commitment to broadcasting standards ground
2. The consideration made of broadcasting compliance, and
3. The consideration made of corporate governance issues

I also asked Ofcom to consider whether any of the new, substantive representations I received affected its assessment.

Broadcasting standards

I have taken careful account of all relevant representations and Ofcom's advice and have, today – as required by the legislation – written to the parties to inform them I am now minded-to-refer the merger to the CMA on the grounds of genuine commitment to broadcasting standards.

Threshold for referral

I will now set out the technical reasons for this decision.

Questions were raised about the threshold for referral. The legal threshold for a reference to the CMA is low. I have the power to make a reference if I believe there is a risk – which is not purely fanciful – that the merger might operate against the specified public interests.

In its original report, Ofcom stated that “...we consider that there are no broadcasting standards concerns that may justify a reference”. At the time Ofcom appeared to be unequivocal. Following the additional representations, Ofcom has further clarified that “...while we consider there are non-fanciful concerns, we do not consider that these are such as may justify a reference in relation to the broadcast standards public interest consideration.”

The existence of non-fanciful concerns means that – as a matter of law – the threshold for a reference on the broadcasting standards ground is met.

In light of all representations and Ofcom's additional advice, I believe these are sufficient to warrant the exercise of my discretion to refer.

Lack of procedures for broadcast compliance in the UK for Fox News

The first concern was raised in Ofcom's public interest report: that Fox did not have adequate compliance procedures in place for the broadcast of Fox News in the UK and only took action to improve its approach to compliance after Ofcom expressed concerns.

Ofcom has now confirmed it considers this to raise non-fanciful concerns but which are not sufficiently serious to warrant referral. I consider that these non-fanciful concerns do warrant further consideration.

The fact that Fox belatedly established such procedures does not ease my

concerns, nor does Fox's compliance history.

Ofcom was reassured by the existence of the compliance regime which provides licensees with an incentive to comply. However, it is clear to me that Parliament intended the scrutiny of whether an acquiring party has a "genuine commitment" to attaining broadcasting standards objectives to happen before a merger takes place.

Third parties also raised concerns about what they termed the 'Foxification' of Fox-owned news outlets internationally. On the evidence before me I am not able to conclude that this raises non-fanciful concerns. However, I consider it important that entities which adopt controversial or partisan approaches to news and current affairs in other jurisdictions should, at the same time, have a genuine commitment to broadcasting standards here. These are matters the CMA may wish to consider in the event of a referral.

Corporate governance failures

Turning to the question of corporate governance failures, Ofcom states in its latest correspondence that these raise non-fanciful concerns in respect of the broadcasting standards ground. However, it again concludes that these concerns do not warrant a reference.

I agree that corporate governance issues at Fox raise non-fanciful concerns, but in my view it would be appropriate for these concerns to be considered further by the CMA.

I agree with the view that, in this context, my proper concern is whether Fox will have a genuine commitment to attaining broadcasting standards objectives. However, I am not confident that weaknesses in Fox's corporate governance arrangements are incapable of affecting compliance in the broadcasting standards context.

I have outstanding non-fanciful concerns about these matters and I am of the view that they should be further considered by the CMA.

Representations from parties

Before I come to a final decision, I am required – under the Enterprise Act 2002 – to allow the parties to make representations on my proposed decision, and this is the reason my decision at this stage remains a minded-to one. I have given the parties 10 working days to respond.

Following receipt of any representations from the parties I will aim to come to my final decision in relation to both grounds as promptly as I can.

Close

I would remind the House that should I decide to refer, on one or both grounds, the merger will be subject to a full and detailed investigation by the CMA over a six month period. Such a referral does not signal the outcome of that investigation.

Given the quasi-judicial nature of this matter, my decision cannot be guided by the Parliamentary timetable. If I come to my decision during recess I will write, as I have previously, and return to this House at the earliest possible opportunity to provide an update.

I commend this statement to the House.