

News story: Home Secretary's Hillsborough advisor to step down

The Prime Minister and Home Secretary today expressed their gratitude to their Hillsborough advisor, the Right Reverend James Jones KBE, following his decision to stand down.

Bishop James decided to step down from his formal position after the Crown Prosecution Service announced its final charging decisions and Hillsborough matters move into the criminal proceedings stage.

He will continue to maintain a close interest in Hillsborough matters.

The Prime Minister and Home Secretary today thanked Bishop James for the significant contribution he has made to Hillsborough matters, which began with his chairmanship of the Hillsborough Independent Panel between December 2009 and September 2012.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

Bishop James Jones has been a trusted and loyal counsel to me, the current Home Secretary and, most importantly, the Hillsborough families for many years.

He has held a vital and unwavering role in the continued search for justice through the independent panel and as an independent adviser to government.

He steps down from this position with my utmost thanks and gratitude for his work and service.

Home Secretary Amber Rudd said:

Bishop James has always provided timely, constructive and wise advice which has proved very valuable, particularly in terms of conveying the views of the bereaved families whose trust he has gained.

I am immensely grateful to Bishop James for all his work, but agree this is the right time for him to stand down as my advisor with the focus now firmly on criminal proceedings.

Bishop James was appointed as the Home Secretary's advisor on Hillsborough by Theresa May in October 2012.

Since then he has provided advice to the Home Office on a wide range of Hillsborough-related matters during the fresh inquests and up to the charging

decisions.

Bishop James also researched and wrote his report on the experiences of the Hillsborough families which the Home Office published in November 2017.

He will formally stand down on 31 March.

Going forward, the Hillsborough families will be entitled to support offered by the government-funded court-based Witness Service, which provides emotional and practical support, advice and information, regardless of whether or not they are witnesses. The Crown Prosecution Service will also keep the families informed regarding developments with trials and court hearings.

[News story: Dame Mary Archer reappointed as Chair of Science Museum Group](#)

Dame Mary Archer

Dame Mary Archer DBE started her career as a physical chemist and taught Chemistry at both Oxford and Cambridge Universities. Dame Mary was Chair of Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, 2002–2012, and a founder director of Cambridge University Health Partners, 2009–2012. In 2012, she was appointed DBE for services to the NHS.

Dame Mary is President of the National Energy Foundation, the UK Solar Energy Society, Cambridge Global Health Partnerships and the Guild of Church Musicians. She is chair of Cambridge Early Music, a trustee of the Britten Sinfonia, and a non-executive director of Hydrodec Group plc.

The role is not remunerated. This appointment has been made in accordance with the Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments. The appointments process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Under the Code, any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years must be declared. This is defined as including holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation, or candidature for election. Dame Mary Archer has declared no such political activity.

Press release: New government initiative to reduce rough sleeping

- New Rough Sleeping Team to drive reductions in rough sleeping
- Targeted £30 million fund for 2018 to 2019 for local authorities with high levels of rough sleeping
- Latest action is part of the government's ongoing work to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it by 2027

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid today (30 March 2018) set out a bold cross-government plan of action to significantly reduce the number of people sleeping rough as the [Homelessness Reduction Act](#) comes into force next week.

Based on proven activity that has helped deliver substantial decreases before, this further action will have a rapid impact on rough sleeping now and represents major progress towards the government's commitment to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it altogether by 2027.

The new package of measures – which builds on government action to date – includes:

- a new Rough Sleeping Team made up of rough sleeping and homelessness experts, drawn from, and funded by government departments and agencies with specialist knowledge across a wide-range of areas from housing, mental health to addiction
- a £30 million fund for 2018 to 2019 with further funding agreed for 2019 to 2020 targeted at local authorities with high numbers of people sleeping rough; the Rough Sleeping Team will work with these areas to support them to develop tailored local interventions to reduce the number of people sleeping on the streets
- £100,000 funding to support frontline Rough Sleeping workers across the country to make sure they have the right skills and knowledge to work with vulnerable rough sleepers.

In addition, the government is also working with the National Housing Federation to look at providing additional, coordinated move-on accommodation for rough sleepers across the country. This builds on the existing 3,750 'clearing house' places already provided in London

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said:

This winter has tragically claimed the lives of a number of people sleeping on the streets. This is completely unacceptable in modern

Britain.

No one should ever have to sleep rough and this government is determined to break the homelessness cycle once and for all.

Tackling the causes of rough sleeping is undoubtedly complex but we must do all we can – working across central and local government, the voluntary and charity sector – to help the most vulnerable in society and eliminate rough sleeping for good.

The [Homelessness Reduction Act](#) is the most ambitious legal reform in decades and places new duties on councils to prevent and relieve homelessness, including for single homeless people who are at greater risk of sleeping rough.

The new package of measures announced today provides cross-government support and funding for local housing authorities to drive a significant reduction in rough sleeping.

Departments across government are working to support the Act and make sure there is sustained progress on the commitment to halving rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminating it all together by 2027.

This package of new measures will be supported by the:

- Department of Health and Social Care – which will make available experts in mental health and drug treatment services to help support the new outreach teams, including in hostels
- Ministry of Justice – which will focus on making sure prison and probation work with local authorities and outreach teams to identify prisoners and offenders serving community sentences who are at risk of sleeping rough
- Home Office – will encourage the policing sector to work in partnership with local authorities on rough sleeping, including enforcement where appropriate, and to identify and share best practice
- Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport – which will work in partnership with MHCLG to explore opportunities for new Social Impact Bonds that build on the success of existing programmes providing effective and innovative support to rough sleepers

The government is taking significant action to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping through:

- £1.2 billion investment in various programmes, including protecting core

funding of £315 million to local authorities for their work on homelessness, and an additional £617 million in Flexible Homelessness Support Grant funding, which councils can use to work more strategically to prevent and tackle local homelessness pressures

- piloting the Housing First approach – working with the Metro Mayors in the Liverpool City Region, Greater Manchester and the West Midlands, to support rough sleepers with the most complex needs
- a new cross-government taskforce supported by a panel of homelessness experts, charities and local government that is driving forward a new national strategy to be published in July that will make life on the streets a thing of the past
- investing £9 billion to build more affordable housing, including new council homes
- up to £135 million of dormant assets will be directed to Big Society Capital for them to deploy into a substantial programme of investment in housing for vulnerable people including those most at risk of homelessness or rough sleeping; the first investment opportunities in this programme will be launched in the autumn

Further detail is available on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

The [Homelessness Reduction Act](#) comes into effect on 3 April 2018. Read [more information](#) on the Homelessness Reduction Act.

Clearing Houses provide supported housing in London for people with a history of rough sleeping. All properties are self-contained 1-bed or studio flats and are provided by housing associations.

In January, the Secretary of State for Culture announced that up to £135 million of dormant assets would be directed to Big Society Capital (BSC). BSC are currently developing a strategy to deploy the majority of this into a substantial programme of investment in housing for vulnerable people including those most at risk of homelessness or rough sleeping. Read [more on dormant assets](#).

[News story: Airline Insolvency Review](#)

to examine protection for air passengers

Repatriation and refund protection will be considered as part of an independent review into the levels of protection that are available for passengers who find themselves impacted by the failure of an airline.

The Airline Insolvency Review will also examine how the market could be reformed to ensure that passengers are better protected. This will include looking at ways of allowing airlines to wind down while at the same time carrying out and financing the repatriation of passengers.

Following the collapse of Monarch Airlines in October 2017, 110,000 passengers were left without transport home, leading the government to successfully carry out the [biggest ever peacetime repatriation programme](#). This review will consider if there are alternative models that can provide protection ensuring consumers can travel with peace of mind, knowing that they are never without safeguards.

Today (30 March 2018) the Department for Transport has published the [terms of reference for the review](#), outlining the next steps for progress in this area.

The review independently chaired by Peter Bucks will provide an interim report to the Secretary of State for Transport by summer 2018. It will outline the potential options that could be put in place to repatriate passengers of a collapsed airline. It will be supported by a team of professional advisers.

A final report will be produced by the end of 2018 which will offer recommendations on repatriation, refunds and the current financial protection arrangements for air-travel holidays.

Aviation Minister Baroness Sugg said:

It is hugely distressing for British holidaymakers to find themselves stranded abroad due to the failure of an airline or travel company.

We are determined to put passengers at the heart of transport which is why we have announced the Airline Insolvency Review and appointed an independent chair to consider how best to protect passengers.

I have asked Peter to look at all the possible options including new legislation to ensure that passengers are able to get home if their airline collapses.

Airline Insolvency Review chair, Peter Bucks said:

Given the scale of changes in the air travel market over the past decade it is high time to take a fresh look at how well consumers are protected in the event of an airline insolvency.

Recently we have seen first-hand the very real consequences of an airline failure and the distress that this can cause for passengers.

This review will engage with stakeholders to establish what could be done in the event that travellers need to be repatriated and how best this is achieved.

Press release: Government delivers on manifesto pledge with £6 billion package to help end fuel poverty and drive innovation in energy efficiency

- Flagship £6 billion energy efficiency scheme to start with re-focusing flagship scheme entirely on low-income and vulnerable, cutting bills for thousands more families until at least 2028
- plans to extend the Warm Home Discount ensuring over 2 million low income and vulnerable customers receive £140 off their energy bills next winter
- drive to increase world-leading British innovation in green technologies as part of the government's Clean Growth Strategy

Nearly a million more low-income households are set to benefit from innovative energy saving measures under new plans outlined today by the Minister for Energy and Clean Growth Claire Perry, as part of the Clean Growth Strategy.

A consultation has been launched today to focus [Energy Company Obligation \(ECO\)](#), the government's flagship energy efficiency scheme to tackle fuel poverty and reduce carbon emissions by providing energy efficiency upgrades and heating measures – entirely on low income households. Currently only 70% of beneficiaries are from low income families. Since the scheme was launched in 2013, more than 1 in 16 homes have benefitted from over 2.2 million improvements.

This is the latest step in the delivery of the [government's Clean Growth Strategy](#), aiming to bring 2.5 million fuel poor homes up to an Energy Performance Certificate rating of C by 2030, helping to save energy and bring

down bills.

Alongside this, a separate consultation looks ahead to [changes to the Warm Home Discount](#) beyond next winter which will enable all payments to be made automatically. The Warm Homes Discount provides a much needed top up of £140 to the energy bills of the most vulnerable in society. The consultation will also include extending eligibility to people who receive Universal Credit who are in work and earn less than £16,190 a year.

Speaking on a visit to [Q-bot](#) in Wandsworth South London, an award-winning technology company which has developed robots to install underfloor cavity insulation quickly and easily, Energy and Clean Growth Minister Claire Perry said:

We have made clear our commitment to eradicating fuel poverty and by making our flagship energy scheme 100% focused on low-income families we are taking another step towards achieving this goal.

As set out in our Clean Growth Strategy, we also want to continue to drive world-leading British innovation in green technologies for the benefit of all consumers. That's why we are increasing the opportunity for energy suppliers to get funding to develop new and innovative energy saving products and services, like the award-winning company Q-bot's robotic insulation service.

The proposed changes to focus 100% of the ECO scheme on the fuel poor would see energy saving improvements like insulation and modern efficient heating systems installed in 900,000 homes by March 2022. The government also committed to maintaining funding for home energy efficiency until at least 2028 as part of the Clean Growth Strategy, a total of just over £6 billion.

At the end of February the government also took action for 11 million households on [poor value standard variable tariffs](#) by introducing a landmark Bill into Parliament for a temporary price cap on these tariffs until effective competition is in place.

Notes for editors

1. The consultation on the new Energy Company Obligation scheme is open until 29 April 2018.
2. The current Energy Company Obligation scheme will end in September 2018. The scheme places an obligation on larger energy suppliers (currently 15) to deliver heating and energy efficiency measures. This is split between Affordable Warmth, for low income and fuel poor households (which accounts for 70% of the scheme) and the Carbon Emissions Reduction Obligation (the remaining 30%), which is available to all households.
3. The ECO programme requires energy suppliers with over 250,000 customers to provide energy efficiency upgrades and heating measures to homes across Britain.

4. In line with the government's Industrial Strategy, the refocused scheme includes proposals to support innovation in the sector. Suppliers will be able to devote up to 20% of their delivery target to supporting innovative measures. If all suppliers do this then as much as £128 million could be spent supporting British innovation.
5. Since ECO was launched in 2013, more than 1 in 16 homes across Britain have benefitted from over 2.2 million improvements installed.
6. The ECO consultation will also look at increasing parts of the scheme delivered through local referrals enabling local authorities to identify households who will benefit the most from energy efficiency measures, including those with health problems that are made worse by cold homes.
7. The proposals to extend the current [Warm Home Discount](#) scheme are open for consultation until 29 April 2018.
8. The government is also currently looking at ways to make it easier for those eligible for the Warm Home Discount to receive it automatically. A consultation was launched earlier this year on new data sharing powers to better target those households which are fuel poor and would benefit most from a rebate on their energy bills.
9. Reforming and extending policies on fuel poverty are a key part of the government's commitment to protect vulnerable consumers. Ofgem recently extended its Safeguard Tariff Cap on pre-payment meter tariffs to protect a further 1 million vulnerable households, bringing the total protected to 5 million households this winter.