

# Swearing in of the new Cabinet: Address by Governor Nigel Dakin CMG

This is my first public, if not private opportunity, to congratulate you Premier – and your party – for your remarkable victory at the polls on Friday. Congratulations. It allowed a transition of power to have occurred by 4pm the following day and it has been excellent watching you and your Deputy Premier getting to grips with the challenges and opportunities from that point onward. For example you and your Deputy go into this first Cabinet already well briefed by experts and officials, on the situation regarding the finances and health of this Territory.

And now to turn to and congratulate the members of the new Cabinet, who in the last few minutes have been appointed as Ministers, have had their portfolios formally assigned and, along with the Deputy Governor and Attorney General, have taken the oath of allegiance and the oath of due execution of office. We very much look forward to now working with this new elected government, to help enable your manifesto. I know the expectations that have been placed on you and I know you feel them keenly. So, after the Premier has spoken, we will move rapidly to the business of Cabinet.

The first item we will discuss is the way Cabinet works, differing roles in Cabinet, and the notion of collective responsibility. Given you have a manifesto promise around ‘freedom of information’ I think it is worth sharing with the public some of what we will say on this issue because there is much misinformation circulated on this, not least as part of the Constitutional conversation that was generated in 2019.

Cabinet members are provided with a manual entitled ‘Responsibilities and Procedures for Cabinet and Government Business’. On this point it says:

“The basic requirement for the successful operation of the Constitution is that all members of the Cabinet should work together in unity as a team. The first duty of all members is to play a full part in reaching the decisions on policy matters which only the Cabinet can take. All members of the Cabinet are jointly responsible for all decisions taken by the Cabinet. This principle of collective responsibility is vital to the success and effectiveness of the system of ministerial government. Matters will be fully discussed in the Cabinet, but will not be put to the vote. All members of the Cabinet have not only full liberty but a clear duty at meetings of the Cabinet to speak for or against any proposal before it. If agreement of all members cannot be reached initially it may be necessary for further discussions to take place until either full agreement is reached on the substance of the matter or else the dissentient(s) agree to accept and support the decision of the Cabinet as a whole, even though they may continue to be strongly opposed to it personally. A member who is not able to accept and support a decision taken by the Cabinet has only one course open to him (or her), which is to resign. Otherwise, each and every member of the Cabinet is bound to support the Cabinet’s decision, and to accept responsibility for

it, once the Cabinet has given its advice to the Governor and he has accepted that advice.

Away from the manual, in a very practical sense, this makes sense because most of the serious issues facing Government require more than one Ministry to work together to deliver a result. That has been particularly true in the past year and as the world and government gets ever more complex it will certainly be true in the future.

It is therefore no good if, as we walk out of the Cabinet room, different Ministries are hearing different things from different Ministers, or a member of Cabinet is saying publicly that they do not agree with a particular course of action. This includes myself not least because, in terms of providing steady national leadership, if the Premier and the Governor are divided, that route leads to national confusion. At time of pandemic that would be nothing short of disastrous.

I have noted misrepresentation of the role of the Deputy Governor and Attorney General in Cabinet. You will find they bring a wealth of experience into the Cabinet room but – and this is key to understanding how they contribute – they do not have a veto on matters of policy. They do have the option that if they felt strongly on an issue they could – as others in Cabinet can – resign.

The Attorney General's role, as the Government's lawyer, is to keep the Government – and by extension decisions being taken by you the Ministers – 'safe'. I often hear the refrain 'the AG is blocking something in Cabinet'. When you hear that phrase you need to translate what the person saying it really should have said, which is: 'the law is preventing something occurring in Cabinet'. Cabinet does not and will not break the law and as President of the Cabinet I of course cannot allow that. So it is the law that holds the veto. The elected Government of course controls the Legislature, where laws are made, and where the people have placed legislators to pass laws that protect them, not least from over-reach by Government.

The Deputy Governor's role in Cabinet is to help Cabinet understand the implications and consequences – in terms of delivery – regarding decisions Cabinet is taking. Unless the gearbox between a Cabinet decision and Public Service delivery is in good shape, decisions made in Cabinet are just 'talk', and little more. Again, the DG won't 'veto' a policy decision but she will have made Cabinet aware on the likelihood or not of the policy they are about to agree actually having the sort of real-world effect they wish and – like the AG – ensure her comments are recorded in the Cabinet minutes.

Finally, my role as the Chair, is to make sure matters are fully discussed in Cabinet and as I said members not only exercise their liberty, but also discharge their duty, to speak for or against proposals and also bring value into the conversation by exploring first and second order consequences that those preparing Cabinet papers may not have considered. My role is then to ensure the Cabinets discussion moves towards the consensus required. The Premier of the day will always have the first and last word on this, as they wish.

There are times I express my own views but on matters that are devolved, and Health is at present a good example, my view is just that, a view. It is the Premier and his elected Cabinet who decide, I have no 'veto' if it's a policy I disagree with.

However as Chair there are three moments when I must veto, I am given no choice. Those are: a) if the Attorney General has told Cabinet the course of action is unlawful but Cabinet presses on anyway; b) if the Ministerial Code or Principles of Good Governance are being broken and; c) if I have a UK Secretary of States Order placed on me. The Premier can of course appeal over my head to the Secretary of State if I do veto, which means any decision I make is not going to be cavalier.

It's worth saying that since I started to Chair Cabinet I have not had to use a veto and members of the new Cabinet, and the old, will recall that even when I had Emergency Powers – during the early part of the Pandemic – Cabinet remained a collegiate, consensual decision making body. I hope this new Cabinet will find my style is just that – seeking to enable you, not frustrate you – while keeping us – all – within the law and operating at the highest standards of Ministerial Government.

Two final points: the first is that I will announce the appointed representatives to the House, that I personally choose, tomorrow through a press statement and second; that I received news this morning that – as we had hoped and planned – a British Airways flight has now departed the UK, and will arrive with us shortly, via Antigua, carrying a further 23,400 doses of the Pfizer vaccine which should allow us to reach a point of 40% vaccination by May.

It seems real world evidence now strongly suggests that not only does the Pfizer vaccine seriously reduce hospital admissions and death, but also reduces transmission rates. I note in your 200 day plan your Government wishes to move to as complete a vaccination of the islands as is possible by August; a pledge I and many others very much look forward to supporting you in as it is not only our only way out of a health crisis, but also signals the start of our return to economic prosperity.

Premier may God bless these Turks and Caicos Islands and may also God Bless your new Government. I very much look forward to working with you.

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## [Lord Ahmad statement on UN Security Council resolution to sanction Sultan Zabin](#)

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Prime Minister's Special Representative on

Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict and Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth, said:

Today's UN Security Council Resolution 2564 (2021) sanctioning Sultan Zabin clearly demonstrates that the international community will not tolerate the atrocious use of torture and sexual violence in conflict zones. It is just and right that Zabin is sanctioned for leading the Criminal Investigation Department's (CID) heinous campaign of systematic arrest, detention, torture, sexual violence and rape against politically active women in Yemen.

Using sexual violence as a weapon is a terrible crime, and the UK will continue to call out perpetrators and hold them to account.

## **Media enquiries**

Contact the FCDO Communication Team via email (monitored 24 hours a day) in the first instance, and we will respond as soon as possible.

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## **[Robert Jenrick's speech to the Centre for Social Justice](#)**

Thank you for that kind introduction.

It's a pleasure to join you and the Centre for Social Justice at the launch of your 'Close to Home' report which makes a really powerful contribution to the debate around how we can end rough sleeping.

In particular, I want to thank Andy Cook and Joe Shalam who are tireless campaigners; the work that the CSJ publishes is both inspirational and integral to our plans for the future.

What guides you is what guides this government: a belief that opportunities should be more equal and background no barrier to success. And a commitment to helping those who have been held back by accident, circumstance or misstep, to achieve the fulfilment and happiness of rewarding work, security at home and nourishing relationships.

The pandemic has reminded us as Robert Kennedy said, that those who live with us are our brothers and sisters, that they share with us the same short moment of life, that they seek, as we do, nothing but the chance to live out their lives in purpose and in happiness.

Which is why our goal to reduce rough sleeping is more important than ever.

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An extraordinary thing has happened over the course of the past year: the pandemic has accelerated and magnified many forces like never before, upending people's lives, businesses and communities. But it is rare that something entirely positive has happened, and that is the manner in which we as a country have supported rough sleepers throughout the pandemic.

Our priority is to ensure that the 37,000 vulnerable people and rough sleepers 'Everyone In' has helped never return to a life on the streets. We have made good progress so far with at least 26,000 of those supported by the programme now in long term accommodation, and new figures published today paint a picture of a country that is changing.

I am pleased to tell you that the number of people sleeping rough has fallen for the third year in a row. Across England, the numbers have fallen by 37% to 2,688. And since Boris Johnson became Prime Minister, the number of people rough sleeping has reduced by over 40%.

We have also published, alongside the snapshot this year, additional management information indicating that the number of people on the streets reported by local authorities fell to 1,743 in December and 1,461 in January.

For the first time in many years London has seen a significant fall as well, mirroring the rest of the country with a 37% decrease. And again, that achievement has been built upon in the months that have passed since.

I want to say thank you to the hard work of Rachael Robathan and Georgia Gould – the leaders of Westminster and Camden councils and their respective teams in the West End. The London figures published today, which show the largest decrease since these statistics began, highlight the impact of their work and the dedication of the staff.

We've seen a number of areas that have reached 0 rough sleepers at the snapshot – including Ashford and Basingstoke – among many others. And major cities have seen quite exceptional improvement, like Birmingham where numbers have fallen to just 17 people.

Having, I hope, praised the many great achievements, in all types of places and by councils of all political colours, it is worth noting that there are wide variations, which shows that whilst some local authorities have achieved truly exceptional things this year, there are others somewhat less so. There are differences of approach and of commitment. Those yet to conquer this issue must learn from those that have or are on the way.

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It is almost a year since I phoned Dame Louise Casey and discussed how the pandemic would impact rough sleepers. Not then a reality in this country, a distant threat, but one whose drumbeat was drawing inexorably closer and

louder. Louise was in Australia, struggling to get a flight home. We agreed immediately that the right approach was to emphasise protecting the most vulnerable people among us. And upon her return she came to Marsham Street and in her characteristic way, gave herself fully to the task ahead. I'm immensely grateful to Louise for her energy, commitment and friendship.

That conversation, and the meetings that took place in the following weeks led to the birth of the Everyone In programme, and later the next phase, our Protect Programme. A programme that has saved many lives.

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TS Eliot said that sometimes things become possible if we want them badly enough. That describes Everyone In. But you also need exceptional people. The work of staff in shelters, of council support workers, of outreach workers, of volunteers at soup kitchens and to so many others – whose work is unglamorous and often unnoticed, but is vital and noble.

I should also like to place on record my gratitude for the commitment and dedication of the civil servants at the Ministry of Housing with whom I work. Under the superb leadership of Penny Hobman and Catherine Bennion, who demonstrate every day a real passion and idealism for this cause.

We know that the community, charity and faith sectors are instrumental to this effort. Importantly, nobody comes off the streets because of the work of one agency. A critical element of the success of Everyone In was due to the quality of our partnerships: so I must extend thanks and gratitude to those charities that have paved the way on this issue, especially to the inspirational Jon Sparkes from Crisis and Petra Salva from St Mungo's.

And I need to thank my two immediate predecessors in this role, Sajid Javid and James Brokenshire. It would be wrong to see Everyone In as some kind of remarkable start-up. Its success was built on the foundations they had laid. Both cared passionately about this issue, and indeed do still.

Sajid started the Housing First pilot – work that as we will hear today, the CSJ has proved so vital in spearheading. The Homelessness Reduction Act happened under his leadership. James oversaw the reinvigoration of the Rough Sleepers Initiative, whose impact is well evidenced and had driven the two prior years of reductions, in 2018 and 2019.

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As our vaccination programme gathers speed and we begin to turn the tide on COVID-19, it is right that we cement the incredible gains we have made over the last twelve months, acknowledging the seriousness and the weight of the challenges we have yet to face.

The late Lord Ashdown, in a notable speech on homelessness, once compared tackling rough sleeping at times of economic disruption to “leaves in a gale” – the faster you collect the leaves, the faster they gust away again, and all the time more fall around you in the headwind. And there will be headwinds to

come as we exit lockdown and move beyond the pandemic.

The truth is, we cannot begin to tackle this issue until we begin to tackle its causes: which are multi-faceted and complex. Unemployment, family breakdown, domestic abuse, insecure housing, criminal justice policy, failures in our immigration system, and above all else – substance misuse and mental health. So we're utilising the expertise of all government departments from the Ministry of Justice and the Home Office to the Departments of Health and of Work and Pensions, investing over £750 million next year to continue to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping and invest in preventative programmes which tackle the underlying issues early.

It is vital that we bring together health and housing to tackle rough sleeping. The marriage of health and housing will be the heart of our strategy.

That is why we have brought forward an investment of £150 million in long-term housing through our Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme, delivering 3,000 new homes.

And a further £272 million will be invested over the course of this Parliament providing 6,000 vital new homes for rough sleepers – the largest ever investment of this kind. These will be a national asset – symbols of hope and opportunity for those looking to turn their lives around.

Thanks to the hard work and perseverance of Robert Buckland and Lucy Frazer at the Ministry of Justice, we are tackling reoffending, ensuring more prison leavers are offered accommodation at release and building a criminal justice system based on second chances and redemption. That takes inspiration from, amongst others, the direction set by Michael Gove when he was Justice Secretary – and I his bag-carrying PPS. It has always stayed with me that more than 50% of rough sleepers have spent time in prison. This must be at the front of our minds as we frame our strategy.

At the Home Office, Priti Patel shares my commitment to supporting victims of domestic abuse and together we have seen the Domestic Abuse Act implemented and fully funded with £120 million of financial support for local councils next year. And together we will use the new freedoms we have as a sovereign country, to create a better and fairer immigration system, so that fewer foreign nationals end up on our streets and those that do can be compassionately and considerately returned to their home countries.

On health and housing, almost two thirds of homeless people cite addiction to drugs and alcohol as both a cause and consequence of rough sleeping. We know the toll that substance misuse takes on individuals and on families – and drug addiction is a global human crisis, at the very heart of this issue, more important than ever as we come out of the pandemic; which emerging evidence suggests has amplified substance misuse through unemployment, isolation and anxiety.

The homeless will not be forgotten when it comes to the vaccination. Last night we asked all local authorities to redouble their efforts to safely

accommodate as many rough sleepers as they can and to register them with a GP, as a good in itself, but also as a precursor to vaccination. At this crucial stage in our vaccination programme, there really is no time to waste. So we have also allocated a further £10 million of funding to help protect people rough sleeping this winter and ensure their wider health needs are met.

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We need to follow in the footsteps of my now somewhat distant predecessor Sir George Young who worked hand-in-hand with homelessness charities in pioneering the first Rough Sleeping Initiative.

That same sense of urgency and resolve is needed again today.

I want to be unequivocal in stating that we will use every mechanism at our disposal to achieve our goal.

And yes, Housing First is an integral part of that mission. I'm grateful to Brooks Newmark for his role in establishing Housing First. As a former Treasury Minister under Philip Hammond I can say it was no mean feat of Brooks and Sajid to persuade him to back it.

Our £28 million Housing First pilots in Greater Manchester, Liverpool and West Midlands are already supporting around 800 of our most vulnerable people off the streets and into secure homes. 600 are now in permanent accommodation. Over 2,000 other Housing First places have been created, many funded through the Rough Sleeping Initiative and our new accommodation programme draws inspiration from it.

I have seen it in action myself. Last Christmas Eve I met a woman in Walsall and Housing First was helping to turn her life around after several years of sleeping rough in local parks and of drug addiction. It was working and she was re-entering society and re-establishing herself as a productive member of it. As I left her flat to drive home to my family, I turned around and watched her welcome her children to her home for the first time in many years. For their first Christmas together in many years. I couldn't help, but cry.

Rough sleeping a terrible waste of lives. To see dignity and purpose and the love of family and friends restored is a wonderful thing to behold.

So I will champion Housing First. One solution – it goes without saying – will not fit all. This must be multi-targeted and multi-focus. But the principle that everything begins with a home will be our guiding star.

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Our strategy will be refined, with the guidance and support of all those willing to offer it to us, but our objective is clear, that no one should have to sleep rough in this country. That is a litmus test of a civilised society. And we will raise the safety net from the street, but addressing the

causes as well as the consequences. Not so much no second night out, but no first night out.

As we come out of the pandemic, and as the Prime Minister has said, we must aspire to build back better. This means not merely mending, or simply restoring a status quo. Nor even more improvement.

It is not like teaching a horse to jump better, but like turning a horse into a winged creature that will soar over fences which could never have been jumped, said CS Lewis. It is in that spirit we will work, together, to resign rough sleeping to the history books once and for all.

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## [Renewing cross-border humanitarian access in Syria](#)

Statement by Ambassador Barbara Woodward

I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock for his briefing and Sonia Khush for her first-hand analysis and, through her, Save the Children for its life-saving work. I would like to register the UK's disappointment that Su'ad Jarbawi of the International Rescue Committee was not able to brief the Council today on the realities of aid delivery in the north-west, following an objection from another Council member.

As the Secretary General set out in his latest report, the Syrian population has entered 2021 amidst some of the most challenging humanitarian conditions experienced in the past ten years of conflict. An unprecedented 12.4 million people are food insecure – an increase of 4.5 million people in just one year. As we have heard today, children are bearing the brunt of this crisis with one in eight children now stunted as a result of malnutrition.

Millions of people in north-west Syria depend on cross-border assistance; cross-line access is no substitute. The situation is more acute with torrential rains and flooding in the north-west. Aid running through Bab al-Hawa has never been more important.

In north-east Syria, cross-line aid delivery from Damascus has failed to fill the gaps left by of the closure of the Yaroubiya crossing. The prevention of humanitarian food distributions, by bureaucratic impediments or due to tensions between armed actors, in the north-east shows cross-line modalities alone cannot be relied on. The Undersecretary General for Humanitarian Affairs has told this Council, on at least five occasions since June 2020, that cross-line assistance is not delivering at the scale or frequency needed to meet humanitarian needs.

The Syrian authorities and the Russian Federation claim that cross-line

access is enough to sustain the humanitarian needs of three quarters of the population is untenable. As is the claim that the West is somehow to blame.

As a first step, we urge the UN to provide comprehensive details of what types of assistance are being delivered and where the greatest gaps lie.

The rationale for renewing the cross-border mandate in July has not diminished. To quote the Secretary-General, more access is needed, not less. And we've heard clearly this morning from Save the Children that 'there is no other way to sustainably program for millions of people without the cross-border resolution'. This Council must do everything in its power to ensure this vital assistance continues.

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## **Coronavirus (COVID-19): Letter to businesses on workplace testing, February 2021**

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