

News story: Lord Reed: Scotland's Devolved Settlement and the Role of the Courts

Lord Reed, Deputy President of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom, delivered the inaugural Dover House lecture on the evening of Wednesday 27 February 2019. The text of his lecture, titled "Scotland's Devolved Settlement and the Role of the Courts" is available for [download as a PDF](#).

Press release: Minister for Asia highlights southeast Asia opportunities at OECD

Mark Field, Minister for Asia and the Pacific, visited the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris on 11 March to address participants at a high-level forum on Southeast Asia.

During the visit, the Minister affirmed the UK's strong commitment to the OECD's role in promoting economic development and the rules based international system, as well as the UK's wish to strengthen the future UK-ASEAN relationship.

In his speech to forum attendees the Minister said:

We all know that trade, investment, and economic growth have the power to transform lives. We also know that removing barriers to trade and improving connectivity between countries and markets can turbo-charge that power. That is why, in my role as the UK's Minister for Asia and the Pacific and for Economic Diplomacy, I focus so much on enhancing economic development and deepening investment. It is also why the work of the OECD is so important, and why the UK supports it so strongly.

We also want to remain a steadfast and active partner to ASEAN. We are investing £2 million to support the OECD's new work on boosting competition – such a key driver of economic growth... we are confident that all this cooperation and sharing of expertise will bring great benefits to the region. I look forward to continuing to

strengthen the UK's relationships with ASEAN – bilaterally; through our new Jakarta mission; and through our support for the OECD.

During his visit the Minister also met with the OECD Secretary General and counterparts from Japan, Korea and other ASEAN partners to discuss how OECD work in the region could be strengthened further.

Mr Field also raised a range of Asia-Pacific issues in meetings with the French Foreign Ministry and think tankers, underlining UK commitment to the region.

Further information

News story: Support on wellbeing for teachers in schools and colleges

A new expert advisory group to look at how teachers and school leaders can be better supported to deal with the pressures of the job will be announced by Education Secretary Damian Hinds today (15 March).

Addressing more than 1,000 school and college leaders and teachers at the Association of School and College Leaders' (ASCL) annual conference in Birmingham, Mr Hinds will say that teachers always put the good of their pupils first but should not take their own wellbeing for granted.

Earlier this year, Mr Hinds launched the first ever integrated strategy to recruit and retain more teachers setting out a comprehensive plan to build the status of the profession and create more opportunities for teachers to progress in their career. It also included an ambition to transform the day-to-day experiences of teachers, and laid out plans to create a positive, supportive culture in schools.

The Advisory Group – which brings together head teachers and principals, teaching and college unions, professional bodies and mental health charity Mind whose CEO, Paul Farmer, co-authored an extensive review for the Prime Minister on mental health and employers – will work with the government to look at how to promote better wellbeing for teachers.

Today's announcement is the latest in a series of steps taken by Mr Hinds to address some of the concerns raised by the profession and create a great culture in schools. These include clamping down on excessive workload, simplifying the accountability system for schools and helping schools improve behaviour management in their classrooms.

Speaking to the conference, Damian Hinds will say:

Teaching is one of the noblest professions in the world – the chance to change lives and help young people build a future is what makes it a calling not a career. Teaching requires high levels of selflessness as teachers always put the good of their pupils first.

Like any really important job, teaching comes with its own challenges and, whilst rewarding, I don't need to tell you how stressful it can be. As a society there is a much greater level of understanding about mental health and wellbeing and it is something many of you raise with me when I visit your schools. Whilst those conversations are focused on supporting your students, I'm clear that your wellbeing is also something we need to prioritise.

As part of the recruitment and retention strategy we want to help you all provide supportive schools culture and as part of that today I'm announcing my plan to set up an advisory group on wellbeing. The group will provide expert advice and work with us to look at how we as the Government and school leaders as the employers can promote wellbeing among our dedicated teaching staff.

Happy, motivated, well supported teachers are more likely to have happy and motivated pupils in their classrooms and that, ladies and gentlemen, is why we're all here.

Mr Hinds will also set out his ambition to help schools follow the lead of other professions that are stepping up efforts to champion wellbeing among their staff – including the NHS, which plans to provide better mental health and wellbeing support to frontline staff as well as employees.

Drawing on this, the expert group will listen to the concerns of teachers and school leaders before making recommendations to the Department for Education, local authorities and multi-academy trusts to raise awareness of the importance of wellbeing in schools and share good practice, advice and support.

The speech follows the publication of landmark new guidance – updated last month for the first time since 2000 – to introduce compulsory health education in schools so that all children are taught how to look after their mental wellbeing and recognise when classmates may be struggling, as part of the government's new relationships, sex and health education guidance.

General secretary of ASCL, Geoff Barton, welcomed the proposals:

Teaching is a fulfilling and demanding job, and we have perhaps been too ready in the past to regard the pressures which are part of teaching as something which goes with the territory.

We now have a much improved awareness of mental health and wellbeing across society, and schools are well aware of the importance of this issue for pupils and staff. The establishment of an expert group to look at how schools can be better supported in

their work around mental health and wellbeing is a good idea and we look forward to its recommendations.

Paul Farmer, Chief Executive of Mind, the mental health charity, said:

Mental health problems at work are common in all workplaces, and although we have made great strides, mental health is still a taboo subject. The 'Thriving at Work' report led by Lord Dennis Stevenson and myself found in many workplaces, opportunities are being missed to prevent poor mental health, including the education sector.

Through our 'Whole School Approach' programme, teachers and school leaders have been telling us that they need more support for their mental health and wellbeing at work. That's why we welcome the Education Secretary's commitment to support teachers and school leaders. Teaching staff do an incredibly important and demanding job, so employers need to support their staff so that they can come into work at their best.

The first, and arguably most important step, will be to start a conversation about mental health that empowers teachers, and make sure they have access to the right training and guidance to support themselves, their colleagues and their students.

The recruitment and retention strategy was developed with teachers, education unions and leading professional bodies to boost teacher numbers, support the 450,000 teachers already working in schools in England, and raise standards for pupils, by:

- Creating an Early Career Framework, the biggest teaching reform in a generation, backed by at least £130million a year in extra funding when fully rolled out. New teachers will receive a two-year package of training and support at the start of their career, including a reduced timetable to allow teachers to make the most of their training. Extra investment will also be pledged, through the £42million Teacher Development Premium, to roll-out the Early Career Framework
- Extra financial incentives to encourage talented teachers to stay in the classroom – Bursaries will be reformed to include retention-based payments for those who stay in the profession by staggering additional payments throughout the first years of their career.
- Simplifying the process of applying to become a teacher – introducing a new one-stop application system to make applications easier for would-be teachers and making it easier for more people to experience classroom teaching.
- Helping school leaders to reduce teachers' workload – helping school leaders strip away unnecessary tasks such as data entry; simplifying the accountability system to clarify when a school may be subject to intervention or offered support; and working with Ofsted to ensure staff workload is considered as part of a school's inspection judgement.

- Creating a more diverse range of options for career progression – helping schools to introduce flexible working practices through a new match-making service for teachers seeking a job-share and developing specialist qualifications and non-leadership career routes for teachers that want to stay in the classroom, with additional incentives to work in challenging schools.

Since becoming Education Secretary, Mr Hinds has made championing the profession one of his key priorities. Last year he provided schools with an additional £508million teachers' pay grant to provide a pay uplift for thousands of hard-working teachers.

Government response: Swansea Bay City Deal independent review: UK and Welsh Government response

In December 2018 the UK and Welsh Governments announced that an independent review would be carried out into the Swansea Bay City Deal. The review has now concluded and today we are publishing the review report.

Both governments welcome the report which provides us, local partners and the private sector with the confidence to invest in the region and bring about economic growth. We are pleased that the report recognises the continuing commitment of all partners to the deal, as well as the positive impact a successful City Deal would have across the region. Both governments accept the review recommendations.

The report acknowledges the strengths of the City Deal, in particular as a key enabler to regional partnership working. It provides a solid foundation upon which our two governments and the regional partners can move forward with rapid delivery of the City Deal. We have already discussed the recommendations with the leaders of each local authority in the region and will continue to work closely with them over the coming weeks to consider how the recommendations can be implemented.

Our initial priority will be the urgent finalisation of the business cases for the Swansea Waterfront Digital District and the project at Yr Egin in Carmarthen. As soon as the final business cases are brought forward, both governments commit to expediting the appraisal process to enable these projects to move into the delivery phase as quickly as possible.

It will ultimately be for the leaders of the four local authorities to decide how they wish to strengthen the region's Programme Management Office and to consider the roles of their committees. However, the report makes a compelling case for these changes – both governments recognise the potential

to drive forward the City Deal through the establishment of a strong portfolio management structure. We will support the region to introduce changes needed to ensure this deal is a success and delivers upon the commitments made in signing the Heads of Terms. Importantly, we want to see the region bringing forward a robust plan and timetable for delivery of the next tranche of projects.

The private sector is a key partner in this City Deal and the Economic Strategy Board has an important role to play in helping it to succeed. The review report rightly recognises the contribution the board makes and its ability to help identify opportunities which the deal can capitalise on. We want to see this board take a more active role in the oversight of the deal, ensuring the best possible projects are supported.

Our commitment to the Swansea Bay City Deal is strong and both governments are determined to see it deliver for the communities of south-west Wales. Working with our regional partners, this review report will help us to achieve this ambition.

[Click here to read the independent review in full on our website.](#)

Press release: Businessman jailed for running three illegal waste sites

Following an Environment Agency prosecution at Worcester Crown court yesterday, Nicholls, 57, of Stanford House, Stanford Bridge, Worcester, pleaded guilty to three charges relating to the illegal operation of waste sites. Nicholls operated under the trading names of UKBF Group Ltd and Plastics Recycling Centre Ltd, at the car park for Smethwick Drop Forge Ltd (SDF) in Kidderminster, land and units at the Gemini Business Park (GEMINI) in Kidderminster, and Cherry Tree Farm in Stanford Bridge.

The defendant deliberately and over a prolonged period, accepted waste onto each of the three sites. He did so without the necessary environmental permits and in breach of the registered waste exemptions required to ensure that there was no risk to human health or the environment. Nicholls avoided costs relating to the waste activity and failed to produce waste records as required by law. Large well known companies were among Nicholls' customers, the court was told.

When Environment Agency officers visited the sites, they found large amounts of assorted types of waste, including hazardous waste, being illegally stored and treated. Large quantities of plastics, contaminated with dairy and wine products, were found at the Gemini and SDF sites, with no measures in place to prevent the liquids from polluting the nearby Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal and River Severn. The quantities found could have caused

significant harm to the environment, including to fish and invertebrates.

Complaints were received by the Environment Agency about rat, fly and odour problems at the Gemini site caused by large amounts of food waste waiting being stored and processed on site. The SDF and Gemini sites were also deemed to be at high risk of fire by a Fire Community Risk Manager, who accompanied the officers on their visits to the sites.

Nicholls gave Environment Agency officers repeated assurances that he would remove the high risk waste types and apply for the necessary Environmental Permit, in response to warnings and to an enforcement notice that was issued. Waste was moved between the SDF and Gemini sites, and after Nicholls and his companies were evicted from the Gemini site, on to Cherry Tree Farm.

Nicholls eventually abandoned the waste filled sites. The landowners are continuing to work with the Environment Agency, and the companies from where the waste originated, to clear the site.

Speaking after the case, an Environment Agency spokesperson said:

Waste crime is a serious offence with tough penalties as it can damage the environment, blight local communities and undermine those who operate legally. This case sends out a clear message that we will not hesitate to take action to ensure the protection of the environment and avoid harm to health. Businesses can support us with this by carrying out their Duty of Care and Due Diligence checks to ensure that they are using legitimate companies to deal with their wastes and not criminals like Mr Nicholls.

To find out how to responsibly manage any waste your business produces or visit our [website](#). We can all play a part in helping to prevent waste getting into the hands of criminals. If you suspect that a company is doing something wrong, you can call the Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60 or report it anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.