

# [Press release: 2018 – a year of change and challenge for the Parole Board: Chief Executive’s blog](#)

## **2018 – a year of change and challenge for the Parole Board**

2018 has not been an easy year for the Parole Board, where we’ve been subject to unprecedented scrutiny and some criticism. It is a testament to the dedication and fortitude of our staff and members that the performance of the Parole Board remains as strong as it does.

Given that the Board make thousands of difficult decisions each year, about people who have committed some of the most serious offences, it is inevitable that our decisions will be criticised and right that they are scrutinised. Most people who experience our work directly know that our decisions are made very carefully and with great thoroughness, ensuring both fairness to the prisoner and the protection of the public.

### **Decision summaries**

Our ability to produce summaries now puts us in a much better position to explain why we make our decisions. This process is working extremely well with well over 600 summaries now issued to victims.

### **New year, new opportunities**

As this year draws to an end, we are well placed to meet the new challenges that will arise in 2019, and we are entering it in a good position and with the confidence of our key partners. This confidence has recently been illustrated by the Parole Board being awarded additional funding this financial year to allow us to continue to schedule hearings at a rate that ensures continued throughput of cases.

In the new year we should receive the outcome of the review of our Rules, including the new review mechanism. From our discussions with the Ministry of Justice we are optimistic that the new framework will give us a strong platform on which to make further improvements.

### **Work with us – member recruitment 2019**

In recent weeks I have spent some time preparing the ground for our next recruitment campaign which we intend to launch early in 2019. Detailed information to assist people who might be interested [has now been added to our website](#).

The Parole Board are asked to make thousands of difficult decisions each year – Parole Board members tell me that the work is very rewarding. They make a difference to people's lives.

### **Commitment to improving diversity**

As I have commented previously, we are really keen to ensure we have greater success in attracting people from minority backgrounds. Nearly a quarter of those in prison are from a BAME background and it is important that the people making decisions about the liberty of those serving sentences better reflect the diverse communities they serve. This targeted drive is not a one off, it will be running through a series of campaigns over the next two years and will then be embedded into every campaign.

I have been speaking to a range of people who might be able to help us draw attention to our campaign and identify suitable candidates. You do not need to be a lawyer or a CJS professional to join the Parole Board – our primary focus is on recruiting people who can help us make rigorous, evidence-based decisions, which are both fair to the prisoner and ensure the protection of the public. Training and mentoring is provided after appointment.

### **Get in touch**

If you are interested in helping us, or you know of people who might be interested, it would be helpful if you could let us know:

[workwithus@paroleboard.gov.uk](mailto:workwithus@paroleboard.gov.uk)

Finally, I would like to commend all Parole Board staff and members, and indeed the many other hard-working and dedicated professionals who have worked with us to undertake our core function of protecting the public in the face of these challenges.

Martin

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## **[Press release: New strategy sets ambitions for a cyber security workforce fit for the future](#)**

A new UK Cyber Security Council will help develop a skilled workforce for the future and give talented youngsters a clear career pathway in cyber security, Digital Minister Margot James announced today.

The move is part of an Initial [Cyber Security Skills Strategy](#) which sets out an ambitious approach to develop the right cyber security capability in the UK now and for the future.

Up to £2.5 million of National Cyber Security Programme investment is being made available to design and deliver the new independent UK Council. Through the government's modern Industrial Strategy it will ensure that the UK's expanding sector is equipped with the expertise needed in the digital age.

The strategy sets out clear objectives to build the UK's cyber security capability including:

- Appointing independent Ambassadors to help promote the attractiveness and viability of a career in cyber security to a broader and more diverse range of individuals;
- Launching the refreshed CyberFirst brand in 2019 which will bring greater coherence to the government's offering on cyber security skills; and
- A commitment to continue investing in cyber security capability across all age groups to develop the next crop of cyber security professionals.

Minister for Digital Margot James said:

Making sure we have a skilled cyber security workforce now and for the future is not only central to our national security but is also fundamental to the UK becoming the world's best digital economy. This strategy alongside the creation of an independent UK Cyber Security Council will be the next step in equipping our growing and vibrant cyber security sector with the expertise it needs for years to come.

The main objectives within the strategy are:

- To ensure that there is a clear pathway for those who want to have a successful career in cyber security that can be navigated easily.
- To ensure that the right education and training is in place so we can identify, train and place new untapped cyber security talent.
- To ensure the UK's workforce across all sectors have the skills they need to make informed decisions about cyber security risks and support a secure UK digital economy.
- To ensure the UK remains a global leader in cyber security with access to the best talent, with a public sector that leads by example in developing cyber security capability.

NCSC CEO Ciaran Martin said:

With this strategy the Government demonstrates its ongoing commitment to creating a culture where cyber security can thrive. We look forward to supporting DCMS as they seek to improve the skills of existing workers and inspire the cyber defenders of the future.

Talal Rajab, Head of Cyber and National Security at techUK said:

techUK welcomes this strategy as an important step towards bridging the cyber security skills gap in the UK. Skills are vital to the development of the UK cyber security sector and attracting skilled talent is a constant challenge for industry, making this wide-ranging strategy most useful as a starting point for renewed efforts from both Government and industry.

As part of the strategy will be a 'Call for Views', techUK will be taking input from members. Only through collaboration between Government, industry and academia will the cyber skills gap be bridged and initiatives like CyberFirst and the work around developing a Cyber Council are significant workstreams which techUK and industry will continue to support.

Since the publication of the National Cyber Security Strategy in 2016, government has introduced a range of measures to boost the number and diversity of cyber security professionals in the UK.

Long term initiatives include Cyber Discovery, a £20 million programme which aims to inspire young people to consider a career in cyber security, while identifying and nurturing promising talent.

The CyberFirst initiatives are also continuing to be developed and we have launched the Cyber Skills Immediate Impact Fund (CSIIIF) to increase training in the UK and run the Cyber Security Postgraduate Bursaries Scheme to help boost numbers and diversity.

Those with an interest in shaping the final strategy can now take part in a ten week call for views. The aim is to set out a long term vision and programme of work that is sustainable beyond 2021.

Further Information:

1. Anyone wishing to express their views on the strategy can do so [here](#). The closing date for responses is midday on 1 March 2019.
  2. We will also be holding a number of engagement events in early 2019 – you can register your interest [here](#).
  3. The government has also published its response to the [consultation](#) held in summer 2018 on developing the cyber security profession in the UK. This includes launching a competition to offer up to £2.5 million funding from the National Cyber Security Programme to design and deliver a new, independent UK Cyber Security Council.
  4. Two pieces of research have also been published- 'Understanding the UK Cyber Security Skills Labour Market' by Ipsos MORI, and 'Identifying the Role of Further and Higher Education in Cyber Security Skills Development' by the Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services.
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# Press release: New study looks to get better value from public sector intellectual property and know-how

Industry expert Andrew Mackintosh will lead a project looking at how the public sector's strong record of developing valuable technology can benefit as many people as possible. With such 'knowledge assets' and intellectual property being ever more important in the modern economy, the government is taking steps to capitalise on these assets.

Understanding the full value of knowledge assets held by the government and how to maximise them could help to pay for public services in the future, by ensuring that the government receives a financial reward for its innovation and taxpayers are getting value for money. Better harnessing the potential of new innovations could also boost the wider economy.

A report published at Budget 2018 estimated the value of public sector knowledge assets at more than £150 billion and outlined how the government could do more to maximise their benefits. Now the next step is being taken, with an implementation study led by industry expert Dr Andrew Mackintosh. This will bring together private and public-sector expertise and report in summer 2019.

Chief Secretary Liz Truss said:

Realising the full potential of intellectual property and know-how in the public sector could boost productivity and will benefit the public finances.

This study marks a great step forward for government, in maximising the social, economic and financial benefits of its intellectual property, data and other assets.

Dr Andrew Mackintosh, who will lead the study, said:

I am very excited to be leading this implementation project... This is a strategically important area that many organisations are grappling with across the private and public sectors. I see huge opportunity for the UK public sector to develop new and creative approaches to increase the benefits that its knowledge assets deliver.

The Budget 2018 report recommendations included: providing expertise and guidance within government to support public sector innovation; improving the way we record and measure the value of knowledge assets; and providing the

right incentives and financial support to realise their potential. The study will be focused on implementing these recommendations.

The terms of reference for this study have today been published and can be found [here](#).

Further Information:

Dr Andrew Mackintosh has over 30 years of commercial and general management experience in publicly and privately owned high-technology businesses, including as CEO of Oxford Instruments PLC.

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## **Press release: 26,000 share their views in Thames Crossing consultation**

People have had their say on proposals for a major new road to link Kent, Thurrock and Essex as the consultation ended on Thursday 20 December.

The Lower Thames Crossing is Britain's biggest road project since the M25 was built and the consultation was the latest chance for people to help shape the once-in-a-generation opportunities that the crossing will provide.

The Lower Thames Crossing will nearly double road capacity across the river Thames and almost halve northbound journey times at Dartford Crossing when it opens to traffic in 2027. Highways England began the country's most comprehensive consultation into a roads project on Wednesday 10 October, hosting 60 events which nearly 15,000 people attended.

These events have been in addition to the wide ranging online consultation, which has seen around 26,000 replies come in. The vast majority of responses so far have been online, with people from every corner of the UK engaging with the project, demonstrating how important the multi-billion pound scheme will be.

Tim Jones, Project Director for Lower Thames Crossing, said:

The Lower Thames Crossing consultation is arguably the most significant that has ever been held into a UK road scheme and we have had an excellent response with more than 26,000 people sharing their views. We have endeavoured to ensure that everyone who has an interest has had the chance to have their say so that we can take those views to develop the best possible project.

I would like to thank everyone who took the time to come to our events and to respond to the consultation, the feedback we have received will play an important role in the evolution of our

design. We will continue to work with Local Authorities, communities and stakeholders as we continue to develop our proposals to maximise the benefits and reduce the impact locally, regionally and nationally.

The Lower Thames Crossing will connect communities, boost the economy and add vital extra resilience to the road network while reducing pressure on the existing Dartford Crossing. It is set to be the most ambitious road project since the M25 opened 30 years ago and will include the UK's longest road tunnel.

The 14.5 mile route connecting Gravesham in Kent and Thurrock in Essex is expected to reduce traffic at Dartford by 22 per cent with 14 million fewer vehicles using it every year. It will almost halve the morning peak average journey times between M25 junctions 1b and 31 from nine minutes to just five.

The project will create a new, three-lane dual carriageway connecting the M2 near Rochester and the M25 in Essex between North and South Ockenden. It would include a 2.4 mile-long tunnel under the Thames between Gravesend and Tilbury – the longest road tunnel in the UK – and, at over 50 feet wide, the third largest bored tunnel in the world.

These latest plans include an updated, more detailed design which aims to maximise the project's huge benefits and includes significant changes to minimise the impact on local communities and the environment.

The next stage of the project's development will be to work through people's comments in detail and use them to produce an updated design which will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for planning consent. The application and examination process will offer people a further opportunity to share their views on the project. Subject to statutory processes construction could start in 2022, with the new road opening to traffic in 2027.

## **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

## **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

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**[Press release: Signs help to identify](#)**

## flood risk car parks

The joint project is working to identify all car parks in Tyne & Wear at risk of flooding. The first two areas to be identified are the Quayside in Newcastle, near the Swing Bridge, and low lights car park at North Shields Fish Quay.

Signs have now gone up in both car parks advising people to check tide timetables, sign up to the Flood Warning Service and information on alternative parking locations. In Newcastle, the council will advise when the car park is going to be closed.

The Environment Agency's Taryn Al-mashgari, Flood Community Engagement Officer for Tyne & Wear, said:

The signs are not to deter people from parking there as the vast majority of the time there are no issues. But we want people to be more informed about flooding – it's absolutely vital people understand how they can find out what the current flood risk is and what to do to keep themselves safe. These car parks are in flood risk areas and during particularly high tide they are liable to flooding.

It's particularly important for visitors where people might not be aware of the flood risk. This way that they can be more informed about the current and upcoming flood risk and ensure it's safe to park there.

The same signage will be used at flood risk car parks across Tyne & Wear. Taryn is also working with local authorities to identify car parks also at risk of surface water flooding. Councillor Nick Kemp, Newcastle City Council cabinet member for Environment, added:

Extreme weather events are an unfortunate challenge we all face from time to time so anything we can do to get one step ahead is a positive move. Flooding can strike in an instant and warning drivers of the potential of it occurring by leaving their cars in at-risk locations provides another layer of preparation to go with the defences which have already been invested in.

The work carried out with our partners like the Environment Agency is not intended to deter people from using these car parks, we simply aim to raise awareness of the risks.

Councillor Carole Burdis, North Tyneside Council's whose portfolio includes Community Safety, said:

It's great that, alongside our partners, we're taking vital steps to ensure the safety of our residents by giving them early warning of flood risks. We are committed to protecting the public and keeping everyone informed as much as possible of current flood risks and how to keep safe.

The project is part of the Environment Agency's ongoing work with local authorities to raise awareness of flood risk in our communities and ensure people know how to prepare.

Driving through flood water risks lives – just 30cm of water is enough to float your car. Those travelling over Christmas and through winter are urged to check their route for flood warnings. If you find your way blocked by flood water always turn around and find another way – never take the risk.

For more information on what to do in a flood visit [the gov.uk website](#)