

[Press release: Government launches new Office for Product Safety and Standards](#)

The government has today (21 January 2018) announced the creation of a new national oversight body tasked with identifying consumer risks and managing responses to large-scale product recalls and repairs.

The new Office for Product Safety and Standards will enable the UK to meet the evolving challenges of product safety by responding to expanding international trade, the growth in online shopping and the increasing rate of product innovation.

Today's announcement comes as part of the [government's response to the Working Group on Product Recalls and Safety](#). Established in October 2016 by former Consumer Minister Margot James, the group of product and fire safety experts was brought together to build on the recommendations made by Lynn Faulds Wood in her independent review into consumer product recalls.

In addition to providing support and advice for local authority Trading Standards teams, the office will co-ordinate work across local authorities where action is needed on a national scale and will ensure the UK continues to carry out appropriate border checks on imported products once the UK leaves the European Union.

Business Minister Andrew Griffiths said:

The new Office for Product Safety and Standards will strengthen the UK's already tough product safety regime and will allow consumers to continue to buy secure in the knowledge there is an effective system in place if products need to be repaired or replaced.

I thank the working group for their efforts to help improve product safety and I look forward to working with them in this new phase.

Neil Gibbins, Chair of the working group, said:

It has been my mission to make the public safe since I joined the fire service nearly 40 years ago. That's why I'm pleased to see the government respond to our recommendations with concrete steps to ensure the safety of consumers, now and in the future.

The government will continue to work with stakeholders such as consumer groups, manufacturers and retailers to ensure the office coordinates the UK's product safety regime as effectively as possible.

This will not lessen any of the legal responsibilities that sit with manufacturers, importers and retailers to present safe products to the market, and to take rapid effective action when safety issues arise with their products.

Other actions as part of the government's response to the working group include:

- working with the British Standards Institute to provide guidance on product recalls and corrective action
 - conducting research to help manufacturers and retailers develop technological solutions to product marking and identification
 - increasing the reach of Primary Authority to further share business, local authority and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) expertise to help protect consumers
 - researching consumer behaviour to identify the best way to drive up the number of consumers registering appliances with manufacturers
 - creating an expert panel to bring together trade associations, consumer and enforcement representatives to advise on product safety issues as they arise
1. The office will be based in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and will start work immediately.
 2. It will work closely with the BEIS Chief Scientific Advisor, Professor John Loughhead, to ensure it has access to cutting-edge scientific and technical expertise.
 3. The Working Group on Product Recalls and Safety was set up by former Consumer Minister Margot James to provide recommendations to improve the recalls process and the safety of consumer products. The group published its report in July 2017.
 4. The Office for Product Safety and Standards will cover general (non-food) consumer product safety. It will not cover vehicles, medicines and medical devices, or workplace equipment, which are already covered by other agencies. This remit is in line with the current responsibilities of BEIS on product safety.
 5. The remit of the office does not cover construction products, which are currently subject to a separate review being led by Dame Judith Hackitt. The government will carefully consider the recommendations of that review when it concludes.
 6. The Office for Product Safety and Standards will have a budget of around £12 million per year when fully operational.
 7. There are no changes to the roles and responsibilities of local authorities or other market surveillance authorities. The office will provide a number of specialist services centrally to support consistent national enforcement, including aspects of product testing and technical expertise.
 8. Primary Authority enables businesses to form a legal partnership with one local authority, which then provides assured and tailored advice on complying with environmental health, trading standards or fire safety regulations that other local regulators must respect.

Speech: Supporting efforts for peace and security in Afghanistan

Thank you Mr President, I commend you for your leadership, foresight and diplomacy in convening this important and timely debate. And thank you to the Secretary General for your insightful briefing.

As many of you have said regional partnerships are crucial to achieving long term peace and security. This of course is particularly important when we consider the future prosperity of Afghanistan. Afghanistan is making genuine, sustainable progress in overcoming its many challenges. I saw this for myself when I visited Kabul only 3 months ago.

The international community has a crucial role to play in encouraging and promoting this progress, as do the regional partnerships and the initiatives that have been discussed here today. We warmly welcome the efforts underway to improve the links between Afghanistan and its regional partners in South and Central Asia. This, I believe, is critical to achieve greater economic development in Afghanistan, which of course is an essential factor for long-term stability.

Now such co-operation will bind common economic interests, reduce frictions and provide further avenues for resolving disputes. The CASA 1000 hydroelectric project is a great example of the benefits of this type of regional co-operation. Afghanistan and its neighbours have worked together and alongside the international community to overcome significant challenges, bringing this important endeavour to the point of implementation. We are confident that more, much more, regional co-operation will now follow. There is a clear appetite for it within some of the most important regional groups, such as the Regional Economic Co-operation Conference on Afghanistan, or RECCA, and the Heart of Asia. Today's meeting is, I believe, an important opportunity to demonstrate this Security Council's whole-hearted support for that type of co-operation.

However, Mr President, there is still a long way to go before Afghanistan's government and people achieve their goal of building a more stable and prosperous country. The United Kingdom will continue to play our part within the international community in supporting this goal. We have committed up to £750 million for the 4 years up to 2020 to help support the Afghan government's work to improve security, to reduce poverty, and to increase broad access to health and education. We are also working closely within NATO to support Afghanistan. Our non-combat troops have played a crucial role in supporting the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces. Through the National Army Officer Academy we have helped to train over 3000 cadets – these are Afghanistan's military leaders of the future.

But ultimately, as others have observed and will do of the course of this

debate, the solution to long-term peace and stability lies not within the military, but in a peace process that is Afghan-led and Afghan-owned. That is why the forthcoming meeting of the Kabul Process for Peace and Security Cooperation is so very important. We encourage all of Afghanistan's regional partners to fully support these efforts towards peace. It takes vision, courage and leadership to begin a conversation with your adversary after years of violence and bloodshed.

However, the time is now surely ripe for that conversation. The people of Afghanistan deserve peace. So we urge President Ghani and the government to use the meeting to reach out to the insurgents and to try to launch a credible peace process. All of us here today should, collectively and individually, express our full support for this peace process, which is vital for Afghanistan's long-term stability.

Credible, inclusive and timely elections are also essential. We commend the work of various UN bodies in helping the government to prepare for parliamentary and presidential elections this year and next.

Mr President, to conclude, Afghanistan continues to face a number of significant challenges in 2018, but this is also a year of real opportunity. With timely elections and the launch of a credible political and peace process this has the real potential to be the year that Afghanistan finally and irreversibly turns a corner. However as the US Deputy Secretary of State so rightly pointed out, the commitment to this must be conditions based and not driven by time lines. We need at times to be patient. This I think is in everyone's interests. Most of all, it will be in the interests of the Afghan people, who have waited so very long for peace. So let us all pledge today to do everything we can, within this Security Council and beyond, to support efforts to bring about that peace and stability.

Thank you.

[News story: New cyber lab classroom opens in Cumbria](#)

Apprentices viewing the new classroom for the first time.

The facility, based at the Energus building near Workington, Cumbria, has been specially designed to train the next generation of cyber experts.

Nine apprentices, who started their training in September last year, will now be able to use the classroom to learn the latest in cyber safety and IT. A second cohort of apprentices will use the classroom later this year.

The facility was funded by the NDA through its Cyber Security and Resilience Project. It forms part of an NDA cyber programme that is designed to grow capability and capacity for the NDA estate and its businesses.

NDA leaders said the new programme demonstrated long-term commitment from the NDA on cyber security and it is looking to invest £80 million over the next 5 years in cyber safety.

Rob Higgins, Business Services Director at the NDA, said:

Cyber security and resilience is vital to the operation of the NDA and its estate. The launch of the first NDA Cyber Lab classroom marks a clear focus on cyber safety and the NDA's commitment to this discipline. The knowledge and expertise of these home-grown apprentices will go a long way in helping to keep the NDA and its businesses safe from the growing cyber threat.

Scott Campbell, a Level 4 cyber security apprentice, said:

The classroom is way beyond my expectations and I feel privileged to be one of the first apprentices to use the facility.

[Press release: Grounds for Judicial Review](#)

Judicial review of Parole Board decisions is governed by [Civil Procedure Rules \(CPR\) 1998 Part 5 section 1](#). Judicial review claims of Parole Board Decisions must be issued on the Administrative Court Office.

More information on issuing judicial review claims on the Administrative Court Office [can be found here](#)

In the context of parole the grounds upon which a judicial review may be sought are:

- Where there is an error in law (for example the Board applies the wrong test for release, or acts outside its statutory powers, takes into account irrelevant matters or fails to consider relevant ones)
- Where there is procedural impropriety, that is unfairness in the decision making process (for example failure to disclose documents to enable representations to be made, refusal to call relevant witnesses or giving inadequate reasons)
- Where the decision is irrational, that is so unreasonable as to be

unsustainable, or where there is an abuse of power.

- Where the body in question has breached the requirement to act compatibly with rights under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

Speech: PM's speech at Downing Street reception to celebrate the legacy of Jo Cox: 17 January 2018

Thank you, thank you very much for those excellent words, Seema, and good afternoon, everyone. It's an honour to have you all here today as we remember the life of a remarkable woman and thank those who are continuing the work that meant so much to her. And I'd like to give a very special welcome to Jo's immediate family. Her husband, Brendan, who has been an inspiration to so many over the past year and a half. Her wonderful children, Cuillin and Lejla; her proud parents, Jean and Gordon; Brendan's parents, Sheila and Gordon; and Jo's beloved little sister, Kim. Kim once said of her older sister that she wasn't a complainer but a doer. It's all too easy to stand on the side lines and say that something must be done. Actually getting out there and doing it, as Jo did throughout her life, takes an extra level of effort and commitment. And that determination to make things happen, to bring about change, was something that defined Jo's work, both before and after she entered Parliament. And in the 19 months since her death, it's a legacy that has been carried forward both by her family and by the Foundation and Commission that bears her name, and at the heart of that work is the fight against loneliness.

In a country of more than 60 million people, and in an age where we can instantly connect with friends, relatives and even strangers around the world, it may seem counterintuitive that any of us could find ourselves feeling lonely. Yet, more than 9 million of us say that we always, or often, feel lonely. 200,000 older people have not had a conversation with a friend or a relative in more than a month. Up to 85% of young adults with disabilities say they feel lonely most days.

As Jo herself used to say, loneliness doesn't discriminate. But just as loneliness can affect any of us, so any of us can help to tackle it. And that could mean simply popping round to see an elderly neighbour or picking up the phone to a relative. Or you could follow the example of Phil Burton, a former Royal Artillery Lance Bombardier who is here with us today. After leaving the Army, Phil realised that many of his ex-servicemen were suffering from social isolation; they had lost the close-knit family that the Armed Forces provided. So, last year, he founded the Veterans Café in Lancashire. Its fortnightly get-togethers create a place where former members of the Armed

Forces can come together, talk, share experiences and access support from charities and the NHS, and the projects proved a huge success, attracting hundreds of veterans of all ages. And just talking to Phil earlier on, he was saying that for many veterans they won't open up to somebody in authority or somebody who's there to help them, but they will open up to another veteran. And that is so important to them, and so many lives have been changed as a result of what Phil has done. So, I was delighted to meet him and present him with a Points of Light award earlier, which recognises outstanding volunteers in our country for their service to others. And the Veterans Café is exactly the kind of local project Jo supported, celebrated and encouraged.

And over the past year and a half, the Jo Cox Foundation has continued that work, most notably with The Great Get Together, and last summer's events were the biggest set of neighbourhood celebrations since the Jubilee street parties. I had the pleasure of attending one in my own constituency, and I am very pleased to confirm that The Great Get Together will return this summer, on 22nd June. It will bring together millions of people on what would have been Jo's 44th birthday. I am certainly looking forward to it.

But Jo's legacy doesn't end there. There is also the Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness, created just over a year ago. And in the spirit of having more in common, it is, as you've just heard from Seema, jointly shared by two MPs: one Conservative, my good friend, Seema Kennedy, who you've just heard from; and one Labour, Rachel Reeves. And both worked closely with Jo during her all too brief time in Parliament. And both have spent the past 12 months looking at what the Government and others can do, to continue her legacy. And the Commission's report, which was published just before Christmas, highlights a range of areas where action is needed. And in response, we've started work on an England-wide strategy to tackle loneliness, which will be published later this year.

Work has also begun on developing the evidence base around the impact of different initiatives, across all ages and within all communities. And the Office of National Statistics is committed to establishing a framework for measuring loneliness, so consistent figures can be used in major research studies. And we will create a new, dedicated fund that will see government working with charities, foundations, and others, to stimulate innovative solutions, provide seed funding for community initiatives, and scale-up existing projects. And all this work will be overseen by a new ministerial lead on loneliness, Tracey Crouch. She will be keeping the challenge of tackling loneliness firmly on the agenda of colleagues across Whitehall. And any of you have met Tracey today at the reception, I think will agree that she is hugely enthusiastic about the role that she has taken on. Because this issue isn't just an issue for our Health Service, or for local councils, every department has a role to play and Tracey will be responsible for bringing them all together to get things done, and she'll be continuing to work closely with the Jo Cox Commission. And of course, she'll also be collaborating with people like you here in this room today. People who, like Jo, believe in causes and ideals, in working together in making a difference. And when I look around the room today, those are the kind of people that I see. You are all contributing in your own way, but in so many different ways.

And Tracey and I are looking forward to working with you to make this project a fitting tribute to everything that Jo stood for.

In Brendan's memoir of life with Jo, he recounts the awful first night after Cuillin and Lejla learnt that their mother had died, and he describes how Cuillin, then aged just five, wrote and sang a song in tribute to her; a song with a simple yet devastating refrain, 'I love my mummy, I will not leave her behind'. Cuillin, don't worry, none of us will leave your mummy behind. None of us will forget her life, her ideals, or what she stood for. And all of us will do all that we can to see that, in her memory, we bring an end to the acceptance of loneliness in our society. Thank you.