

Press release: Probation Champion and Prison Officer of the Year 2017 Awards

- Annual awards celebrate hard-working and dedicated staff from across HMPPS
- Ceremony follows creation of new frontline service HMPPS tasked with reforming offenders
- Government is investing £100 million to boost the frontline by an extra 2,500 staff

Prison and probation officers from across England and Wales are being celebrated for their contribution to reforming offenders and helping turn lives around.

The Probation Champion of the Year Awards and Prison Officer of the Year Awards are an opportunity to celebrate success, share best practice and shine a light on the great work being done by these staff to keep the public safe.

The annual awards are celebrated just months after the launch of [HM Prison and Probation Service \(HMPPS\)](#), a new frontline service that is focused on reforming offenders and cutting crime.

Prisons and Probation Minister Sam Gyimah said:

Our prison and probation officers work in a profession to be proud of, with responsibility for helping to keep the country safe and reforming offenders.

I regularly speak with staff and I am constantly struck by the commitment they show to changing lives and improving outcomes for offenders. It is vital that we celebrate them and mark out gratitude for the compassion and professionalism they show day in, day out.

I want staff to know that their work, experience and loyal service is valued. So many of them really are a shining example to the new recruits that are coming through the system.

Michael Spurr, Chief Executive of HMPPS, said:

I want to thank all staff working in probation and prisons for the amazing work they do on a daily basis.

Our nominees represent the best of a service where dedicated professionals go the extra mile everyday day to keep the public safe and to reduce reoffending.

These awards recognise work that so often goes unseen but is

vitaly important.

There are 8 categories in both the Prison Officer of the Year Awards and the Probation Champion of the Year Awards, which look to reward those with outstanding achievements in areas such as diversity, reducing reoffending and safer custody.

Gareth Key, from Gateshead, was given the overall title of Probation Champion of the Year on Wednesday. He was nominated by the father of an ex-offender who has now sadly passed away. The nomination was for treating their son with decency whilst helping them stay on the right path and steer him out of trouble.

A member of staff at HMP High Down was awarded the title of Prison Officer of the Year at the annual awards. Iain Foskett, who has worked at HMP Highdown for 13 years, was nominated by his line manager for his commitment helping support staff at the prison, actively promoting positive relationships between staff and prisoners, and taking the time to mentor joiners.

The Prison Officer and Probation Champion of the Year Awards come at a time when we are expanding our workforce by recruiting 600 probation officers over the next 12 months and an additional 2,500 new prison officers by 2018.

The Probation Champion of the Year Awards took place on Wednesday 21 June and the Prison Officer of the Year Awards on 22 June.

This last year saw the highest level of new joiners (band 3-5 officers) since March 2010 and prison officer numbers have increased for the first time since March 2016:

- appointed 75 mentors for new starter prison officers to help them in their first few months in the job which we know can be a difficult time
 - started targeted local recruitment initiatives at 30 sites so that governors can more easily recruit the people they need
 - developed a new graduate scheme that will encourage people from a broader range of backgrounds to join the service
 - launched a Troops to Officers scheme that will support people to join the Prison Service after leaving the military
 - introduced a pay increase for Band 3 Officers on Fair and Sustainable (F&S) terms at 31 difficult-to-recruit prisons
 - prison officers have the opportunity to earn over £30,000 depending on location of prison and hours contract; plus public sector pension and other benefits
 - creating 2,000 new senior promotion opportunities for valued and experienced prison officers to progress into
 - substantial investment in marketing and targeted recruitment to generate even more interest in these valuable roles
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Wrexham's innovation hub opening soon

The new Business Wales Entrepreneurship Hub is being established to provide North Wales based entrepreneurs with the wrap around support they need to help their ventures grow.

The Economy Secretary announced in February that he was providing £1m funding to establish the new business hub and said he hoped it would support the creation of 100 new enterprises and 260 new jobs over the next two years.

The Hub, which is supported by the Welsh Government, will also work closely with Welsh ICE (Innovation Centre for Enterprise) to give start ups a bespoke package of support and the very best chance of making their businesses a success.

The new business hub will open in the heart of Wrexham town centre soon but while work to procure and prepare the new headquarters is being finalised, efforts are well underway to recruit the first set of entrepreneurs.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

"I am delighted the Welsh Government is supporting this excellent initiative in Wrexham. It will form an important part of our programme to support businesses across Wales and give start ups and budding entrepreneurs the space and help they need to get their ideas off the ground.

"Innovation and entrepreneurship are vital drivers for the economy and we know from the success of other incubators that this collaborative approach will bring a host of benefits to the wider Wrexham area. And the new Hub building will also provide a real focus to the ongoing regeneration of Wrexham town centre.

"Work is now underway to recruit the Hub's first set of entrepreneurs, with the next workshop being held in Wrexham on 12th July. I would urge local start up companies looking to get their business off the ground to come along to find out more about the potentially transformative help on offer."

The next workshop for entrepreneurs will be held at Undegun, 9-11 Regent St, Wrexham on Wednesday, 12th July. It will provide local start up enterprises with the opportunity to see more detailed plans for the centre and learn more about the support on offer. To find out more you can call the Business Wales Helpline on 03000 6 03000 between 8:30am and 5:30pm (Monday to Friday) or contact us via www.businesswales.gov.wales.

News story: Re-cast EU Insolvency Regulation comes into force

The [Insolvency Amendment \(EU 2015/848\) Regulations 2017](#) come into force on 26 June 2017 and facilitate the functioning and operation of the [EU Insolvency Regulation](#) in the UK.

The re-cast EU Regulation introduces changes to the existing rules on jurisdiction, cooperation, and the recognition and enforcement of insolvency proceedings across the EU.

Further [Guidance](#) (PDF, 293KB, 5 pages) on the re-cast regulation is available.

Press release: DVLA takes home top digital prize

The category for [Digital Public Service Innovation of the Year](#) recognises a public sector product or service that has shown an innovative approach and has seen measurable impact and outcomes.

Last night (Thursday 22 June) DVLA won the category for their [online medical service](#).

This service allows drivers to tell DVLA online about a health or medical condition that could affect their ability to drive. Drivers can now report more than 200 single conditions such as vision, diabetes, and epilepsy by using the service, helping to reduce the processing times for licensing decision for those driving with a medical condition.

This is the second year that DVLA has taken home the title of Digital Public Service Innovation of the Year at these awards. Last year the agency received the award for its [Share Driving Licence](#) service which allows customers to share their details easily and safely.

DVLA, which has some of the government's flagship digital services, is aiming to become a hub for digital motoring, creating online services for customers that make things simpler, better and safer.

Oliver Morley, DVLA Chief Executive, said,

"I am tremendously proud of the work done across DVLA to provide more choice for our customers. To take home one of the top awards at Digital Leaders

DL100 is a significant achievement and recognises the innovative approach we take to deliver new and improved services.

"We've made significant progress in developing digital services in recent years and I look forward to the opportunities ahead of us."

Notes for editors:

1. Digital Leaders is an initiative that has created a shared professional space for senior leadership from different sectors promoting effective, long-term digital transformation. For more information on what they do, visit: www.digileaders.com
2. The DL100 Awards honour the highest achievements from the past year, celebrating teams and individuals who are blazing a trail within the digital space.

Press enquiries:

All press enquiries should be directed to:

First Minister pays tribute to Armed Forces community

The day is an annual opportunity for the nation to show support for the men and women who make up the armed forces community.

The First Minister will attend an event at the Owain Glyndwr Playing Fields in Caerphilly which will focus on the Welsh contribution to defence, past, present and future.

First Minister, Carwyn Jones said:

"We have a proud military history in Wales, and being here today gives us the opportunity to remember some of the anniversaries of previous conflicts in our nation's history. This year will mark the centenary of the Battle of Passchendaele where amongst thousands of young men, Hedd Wyn our Welsh poet lost his life.

"Armed Forces Day is an opportunity to pay tribute to those that have served, are serving and to remember those that have made the ultimate sacrifice in defending our country and way of life."

Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children, Carl Sargeant, who has responsibility for the Armed Forces in Wales, added:

“I think it’s fantastic that we have a day to formally thank our service men and women. It is a chance to think about the sacrifices our Armed Forces gave during these conflicts, and all other conflicts that have taken place over the years.

“It also gives us the opportunity to celebrate and remind us of the importance of supporting and honouring our Serving men, women and Reservists.”