

News story: New Director-General of Border Force appointed

He will replace Sir Charles Montgomery, who will be moving on in September after a distinguished 44-year career in the Royal Navy and Civil Service.

Mr Lincoln, who is currently Director-General of the Home Office's Crime, Policing and Fire Group (CPFG), will take up his new role in the autumn.

He will take overall responsibility for Border Force, a law enforcement command within the Home Office which secures the UK border by carrying out immigration and customs controls for people and goods entering the UK.

Mr Lincoln joined the Home Office in 2014 as national security director and then acting Director-General in the Office of Security and Counter Terrorism (OSCT) before joining CPFG.

Permanent Secretary Philip Rutnam and Second Permanent Secretary Patsy Wilkinson said:

Paul has done a tremendous job in leading CPFG over the past year, overseeing and driving its mission to keep people safe, cut crime, protect the vulnerable and reform police, fire and rescue services.

We would like to thank Paul for his leadership in this area and look forward to working with him as director-general for Border Force.

We would also like to thank Sir Charles for his dedicated years of service in the Home Office and, before that, the Ministry of Defence. Sir Charles has played a vital role in leading Border Force through a period of significant transformation whilst ensuring that the UK borders remain secure.

Commenting on his appointment, Paul Lincoln said:

I am delighted to have the opportunity to lead Border Force at such an important time. I look forward to working with colleagues across the organisation who strive to secure our border and promote national prosperity.

It has been a privilege to have been the Director-General of CPFG, working with colleagues and partners to make the country a safer place.

Sir Charles was appointed Director-General of Border Force in 2013 after a

long career in the Royal Navy.

Sir Charles Montgomery said:

It has been a great privilege for me to lead the men and women of Border Force in fulfilling its vital role and meeting its operational objectives.

I am committed to making this personal contribution until the very last moment I leave the office.

I am delighted that I am to be succeeded by Paul, who has all the personal and professional qualities to be an outstanding Director-General of Border Force.

Scottish Government should be stripped of right to appoint SPA chair

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- Scottish Government should be stripped of right to appoint SPA chair

22 Jun 2017



The next chair of the Scottish Police Authority should be publicly appointed, and not chosen by Scottish Government ministers, it has been argued.

Scottish Conservative MSP Margaret Mitchell said, after current chair Andrew Flanagan announced his departure, it was time for the style of appointment to be changed.

She wants to see the SPA chair chosen in the same way positions like the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman are selected, through a panel chaired by Holyrood's presiding officer involving MSPs from all parties.

She made the comments at today's Scottish Parliament policing sub-committee.

It follows weeks of criticism of the SPA and its senior staff members over a lack of accountability and transparency.

Scottish Conservative MSP Margaret Mitchell, convener of Holyrood's justice committee, said:

"We are now on to our third SPA chair in just over four years.

"It's self-evident that the previous chairs have lacked the necessary skills and experience, on issues like handling the media, to justify their appointment.

"Coupled with this, there has always been a concern about their independence, given they owe their appointment to the Scottish ministers of the day.

"It's now time to review the appointment by ministers and consider appointing the SPA chair in an open and transparent manner."

Press release: Prisons Minister visits HMP Stoke Heath and local probation service

- Prisons Minister Sam Gyimah visits HMP Stoke Heath to thank staff for their vital work
- a record number of prison officer recruits have undertaken training across the country
- government is spending £100 million every year to recruit 2,500 extra officers by 2018

Prisons Minister Sam Gyimah today (22 June 2017) visited HMP Stoke Heath to speak with staff and see reform in action.

As part of his continued nationwide tour of prisons, the Prisons Minister sat down with Governor John Huntington and staff from various roles to hear about the challenges they face and how the recruitment efforts of prison officers are progressing.

The government has been clear in its commitment to building on the essential reforms that are already under way, including supporting both offenders and ex-offenders in finding sustained employment.

As a training prison, HMP Stoke Heath prepares prisoners to lead a life without crime by providing relevant skills for a career on release.

The prison is installing a new car mechanics workshop, which will utilise a large range of technical and bespoke equipment to teach prisoners about all aspects of motor mechanics. This provides them with a more realistic training environment.

In addition, the prison is establishing links with local employers to provide further opportunities for prisoners to gain employment on release and so they can start to rebuild their lives.

Prisons Minister Sam Gyimah said:

Prison and probation officers do a vital and often challenging job, protecting the public by supporting offenders to turn their backs on crime and getting into education and work.

I am grateful to the staff who have taken the time to show me around their establishment and who have openly and honestly discussed matters which are important to them.

I want staff across the service to know that whilst their work for the public is often unseen, it is highly valued.

The prison tour followed a visit to the Warkwickshire and West Mercia Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC). The CRC delivers employment and training to support individuals back to work once released from the prison.

Record numbers of new prison officers joining the service

This additional resource meets the commitment to recruit 2,500 new officers as part of the major package of reforms. In addition the government is recruiting an additional 600 probation officers over the next 12 months.

By having more staff on the ground, the government will provide the support that they need to do their job and enable more time to be spent reforming offenders which will ultimately prevent victims and better protect the public.

Notes to editors

- 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.

The Ministry of Justice has:

- 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 'Unlocked' 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
- substantial investment in marketing and targeted recruitment to generate even more interest in these valuable roles

Visit www.prisonandprobationjobs.gov.uk to find out more.

Green Party says government amnesty for Grenfell victims does not go far enough



22 June 2017

The Green Party has welcomed the government's amnesty for undocumented migrants affected by the fire at Grenfell Tower but says the reprieve does not go far enough.

The party says that it has spoken to victims of the fire who are worried that they were in breach of their tenancy and as a result do not want to come forwards to ask for information about missing friends and family.

The discovery may help to explain why the death toll remains so uncertain as it appears some tenants were subletting their flats or had more people living in them than they had officially declared.

The Green Party has called on the government to extend its amnesty for undocumented migrants to survivors who were in breach of their tenancy and any welfare or benefits related claims.

The party has also asked the government to confirm exactly what legal costs they intend to cover for survivors. Cuts to legal aid mean many residents will struggle to get advice and representation on issues like the replacement of lost documents, seeking insurance compensation, and negotiating time off work with employers. Many lawyers have also raised concerns that residents' views will not be fully taken into account in any public inquiry if they cannot get legal advice [1].

In a letter [2] to Sajid Javid, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Co-Leader of the Green Party Caroline Lucas said:

"In the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower fire, I am hearing reports from volunteers in the community that some survivors are reluctant to officially report friends and family members as missing because they fear the consequences of revealing that eg flats were being sublet or lived in by people not on their tenancy. I hope you will agree with me that knowing the identities of all those who might have been killed is critical and that all necessary assurances should be given to residents of Grenfell Tower that any information they provide will be for reporting purposes only.

"The victims of the fire are already facing enormous personal and practical challenges and do not need any additional worry and stress. This situation is compounded by an ongoing sense that the authorities are not there to help them and I am sure you will agree that the Government needs to work as hard as possible to overcome this impression going forward. I hope you will therefore announce an amnesty for any residents worried that they have might have breached housing, benefit, or immigration rules."

Notes

The latest estimate suggests 79 people have died in the fire that engulfed Grenfell Tower on 14 June. The Green Party's Sian Berry, Caroline Russell, and Amelia Womack have all visited the tower and helped residents with their concerns and queries.

[1]

<http://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/lawyers-rally-to-help-grenfell-tower-residents-facing-looming-mountain-of-paperwork-a3566356.html>

[2] Full text of the letter:

To Rt Hon Sajid Javid,

In the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower fire, I am hearing reports from volunteers in the community that some survivors are reluctant to officially report friends and family members as missing because they fear the consequences of revealing that eg flats were being sublet or lived in by people not on their tenancy. I hope you will agree with me that knowing the identities of all those who might have been killed is critical and that all necessary assurances should be given to residents of Grenfell Tower that any information they provide will be for reporting purposes only.

The victims of the fire are already facing enormous personal and practical challenges and do not need any additional worry and stress. This situation is compounded by an ongoing sense that the authorities are not there to help them and I am sure you will agree that the Government needs to work as hard as possible to overcome this impression going forward. I hope you will therefore announce an amnesty for any residents worried that they have might have breached housing, benefit, or immigration rules.

This amnesty should also extend to undocumented migrants who had been living in the tower block, and to private owners who may have known that subletting practices were going on. The latter may hold crucial information on the whereabouts of people missing following the fire.

It's also critical that there is a clear and flexible package of support for individuals who may have cases with government authorities pending and are worried about the impact of eg the loss of documentation. For example, if someone is in the process of claiming asylum and is now unable to provide evidence, there should be an assumption in favour.

I welcome the announcement that there will be state funding to cover the costs of legal representation at the inquiry. In addition to seeking legal

advice ahead of the public inquiry, residents will need support on a range of issues including the replacement of documents lost in the fire, how to make insurance claims, and how to negotiate time off work with their employers. Please can you confirm which costs will be met and what support will be put in place to ensure victims are able to fully access the support they need.

I appreciate that this letter touches on matters which are the responsibility of a number of Government departments but trust you will liaise to provide a response as the coordinating Minister. I look forward to a timely reply that can go some way towards providing the victims of the fire with critical assurances about their security and wellbeing.

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Lucas MP

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22 Jun 2017



A new Poverty and Inequality Commission is to be created in Scots law – despite SNP attempts to block it.

The proposal by Scottish Conservative social security spokesman Adam Tomkins was voted through in the Scottish Parliament earlier today.

He was backed by other opposition parties to set up the Commission as part of the Child Poverty Bill.

The work of the Commission will be to monitor the Scottish Government's progress on child poverty, and ensure scrutiny on the targets being set for ministers.

However, the SNP voted against the idea, saying it wasn't "value for money"

and would have too much “downtime”.

Despite nationalist opposition, the amendment went through by five votes to four at the Social Security Committee earlier, meaning the legislation will now be strengthened.

Scottish Conservative social security spokesman Adam Tomkins said:

“It’s vital the Scottish Government is held to account on its work to reduce child poverty in Scotland.

“Establishing this Commission in Scots law will do exactly that.

“It’s disappointing the SNP oppose this but, fortunately, all other parties agreed it was a necessary step to take.

“This will hold the Scottish Government to account on its poverty pledges, and make sure the targets being set are hit.

“It strengthens the legislation and allows scrutiny of Scottish Ministers to be as robust as possible.”

The amendment was voted through 5-4 at this morning’s social security committee.

For more on the Child Poverty Bill, visit:

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/103404.aspx>