

## **News story: Lord Ahmad appointed FCO Minister for the Commonwealth and UN**

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon has been appointed as Minister for the Commonwealth and the United Nations at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. His responsibilities also include the Overseas Territories and the Caribbean.

I am honoured to have been appointed and look forward to representing the UK's interests across the world.

It will be a privilege to continue the UK's work internationally in support of our shared human values, promoting international peace, security and prosperity – all of which are in the vital interests of our country. I am also committed to promoting the UK's leading role on global issues such as countering violent extremism and the protection and safeguarding of human rights and religious freedoms.

I am also honoured to have been appointed as the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict.

As the UK prepares to host the Commonwealth Summit next year I also look forward to visiting and meeting with Commonwealth leaders and representatives across the world.

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## **News story: Advocate General appears in first sitting of UK Supreme Court in Scotland**

The Advocate General for Scotland, Lord Keen of Elie QC represented the UK Government in two UKSC hearings in Edinburgh this week. This was the first time the UK Supreme Court (UKSC) has sat outside London. The move was an historic occasion for the Court and well received by the legal profession in Scotland. On Monday 12 June 2017, Lord Keen represented the interests of the Secretary of State for the Home Department in the UKSC case of *Sadovska and another v Secretary of State for the Home Department* in relation to a sham marriage. On 21-22 June 2017, Lord Keen represented the interests of the Secretary of State for Justice in the UKSC case of *Brown v The Scottish Ministers* relating to the rehabilitation of extended sentence prisoners. Judgments for both hearings will be issued in due course.

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## Empowering schools, teachers and parents

Scotland has a good education system. Under the SNP, Higher exam passes are up a third. A record number of school leavers are going on to continued education, training or work. And more young people than ever before are studying at university – including more young people from deprived backgrounds.

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## Swinney owes parents an apology over school autonomy

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Swinney owes parents an apology over school autonomy

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John Swinney should apologise to parents at schools who want to come out of local authority control, following his statement in Holyrood today.

For years, the SNP has hinted it would allow parents, such as those at St Joseph's Primary in East Dunbartonshire, to take control.

However, the education secretary said such a move would not be part of Scottish Government school reforms today, which instead focused on more minor measures.

The Scottish Conservatives have repeatedly called on ministers to give parents the power to take schools out of local authority control if it was in the best interests of teachers and pupils.

The campaign group linked to St Joseph's has also met with First Minister Nicola Sturgeon as part of its drive to make changes to Scottish Government policy.

**Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary Liz Smith said:**

"We want to see a school system that encompasses more choice and diversity,

giving real devolution to headteachers.

“That’s because we believe it’s the existing system, not our teachers, which is responsible for delivering weaker standards in so many areas of our schools.

“So while we welcome the general principles behind the reforms, we don’t think the reforms go nearly far enough.

“They are half-baked and only pay lip-service to real devolution.

“These reforms are not enough to deal with the root cause of the problems faced.”

**Scottish Conservative West of Scotland MSP Maurice Golden said:**

“John Swinney owes the parents of St Joseph’s a full apology.

“For two-and-a-half years, the parents of St Joseph’s have been strung along by the Scottish Government.

“They’ve been led to believe that their plans would be given a fair hearing. It turns out those assurances counted for nothing.

“This whole episode has shown up a Scottish Government which doesn’t listen.

“The SNP should be ashamed of the way it’s handled this from start to finish.”

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The Scottish Conservatives have repeatedly called for parents to be able to take schools out of local authority control:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2015/02/first-ministers-warm-words-consensus-ring-hollow/>

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## **Appointments to new teacher training accreditation board announced**

The Education Workforce Council: Teacher Education Accreditation Committee, which will be known as ‘the board’, will accredit individual Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes.

The newly appointed Chair is Professor John Furlong, Emeritus Professor of Education, Oxford University Department of Education, and Emeritus Fellow of Green Templeton College, Oxford.

Professor Olwen McNamara, Professor of Teacher Education, University of Manchester and Dr Aine Lawlor, former CEO of the Teaching Council Ireland will be Deputy Chairs. These appointments will run from 12 June 2017 to 31 May 2022.

The Welsh Government has announced new rules for the courses that train teachers as part of the drive to attract the best talent to the profession. The changes for ITE include strengthening how schools and universities work together and increasing the role of research.

The latest accreditation criteria are part of the Welsh Government's national mission to reform education and include:

- an increased role for schools
- a clearer role for universities
- structured opportunities to link school and university learning
- a greater emphasis on research.

The changes build on the new professional teaching and leadership standards and link to the wider education reforms taking place in Wales. Pivotal to success is this very different approach to the professional education of the teaching workforce.

Kirsty Williams said:

"I am delighted to announce Professor John Furlong as Chair and Professor Olwen McNamara and Dr Aine Lawlor as Deputy Chairs of the new Teacher Education Accreditation Committee.

"This new board will allow more specific consideration of how ITE programmes will raise the quality of provision – attracting the right people with the right qualifications and an aptitude for teaching, to enter the profession.

"These changes and the new accreditation standards are part of our national mission to raise the standards and standing of the profession."

The [EWC is currently recruiting](#) (external link) members to join the Board.