

News story: Statement from the Justice Secretary on judgment re: John Worboys

I welcome today's judgment and congratulate the victims who brought this unprecedented legal action.

I want to take this opportunity reiterate my heartfelt sympathy for all they, and the other victims, have suffered as a result of Worboys' hideous crimes.

I took expert legal advice from Leading Counsel on whether I should bring a challenge. The bar for judicial review is set high. I considered whether the decision was legally rational – in other words, a decision which no reasonable Parole Board could have made.

The advice I received was that such an argument was highly unlikely to succeed. And, indeed, this argument did not succeed.

However, the victims succeeded in a different argument.

They challenged that, while Ministry of Justice officials opposed release, they should have done more to put forward all the relevant material on other offending.

They also highlighted very significant failures on the part of the Parole Board to make all the necessary inquiries and so fully take into account wider evidence about Worboys' offending.

I also received advice on the failure of process argument and was advised that this was not one that I as Secretary of State would have been able to successfully advance.

The victims were better placed to make this argument and this was the argument on which they have won their case.

Indeed, the judgment suggests that, had I brought a case, the standing of the victims may have been compromised.

Given the very serious issues identified in this case, I can announce today that I intend to conduct further work to examine the Parole Board rules in their entirety.

As a result of the work that has been completed to date, I have already decided to abolish Rule 25 and will do so as soon as possible after the Easter recess. This will enable us to provide for the Parole Board to make available summaries of the decisions they make to victims.

In addition, I will bring forward proposals for Parole Board decisions to be challenged. I intend to consult on the detail of these proposals by the end of April alongside other proposals to improve the way that victims are kept informed about the parole process.

I will make a statement to Parliament this afternoon and set out our response to the judgment – and our next steps – in more detail.

Press release: Traffic officer patrols to step up during South West holiday season

During the upcoming Easter holiday period and over the busy summer months, Highways England traffic officers will patrol and assist incidents on parts of the A30 in Cornwall.

Highways England already works in partnership with Devon and Cornwall Police and forms part of a multi-agency partnership in terms of safety and severe weather handling.

Patrolling of the A30 is a trial initiative to support Devon and Cornwall Police and help to address increased traffic volumes and related incidents on the A30 in Cornwall.

Traffic officers currently assist drivers in any difficulty, co-ordinate the resources of the emergency services, manage traffic to reduce incident-related congestion and clear debris from the carriageways.

Based at both Bodmin police station and Cornwall Council's Castle Canyke depot during the peak holiday months, they will now be closer at hand to provide assistance along the A30 and A38.

Traffic officers will patrol the A30 between Carland Cross and Lifton Down, and Rob Penney, South West Service Delivery Manager for Highways England, said:

We have assisted with incidents along the A30 before, but we've only previously patrolled routinely as far as Daisymount.

The aim is to provide further assistance to motorists on our South West network. We're delighted to extend our service further south into Cornwall and to continue our close working partnership with Devon and Cornwall Police and Cornwall Council.

At this stage, our traffic officers will only be patrolling the A30 during the holiday months, but there may be scope to increase the patrols in the future, dependent on a review of this trial period.

Chief Inspector Adrian Leisk, head of roads policing for the Devon & Cornwall

Police and Dorset Police alliance, said:

Devon and Cornwall Police is delighted to expand its partnership working with Highways England into Cornwall.

This builds on the considerable success of the operational activity on the M5, A38 and A30 in Devon, where Highways England Traffic Officers have supported police resources in dealing with road traffic collisions and other incidents which have the potential to cause disruption on our strategic road network.

This 'one team' approach will undoubtedly help support communities and businesses who rely on a resilient and capable road network in Cornwall, during what will be the busiest periods of the year.

Highways England's Traffic Officer service patrols England's motorways and major A roads, helping to keep traffic flowing smoothly.

Traffic Officers are not an enforcement agency, but they do have the power to stop and direct traffic, close lanes and carriageways and manage traffic, and road users must obey their directions.

Traffic Officers help to keep roads running smoothly by attending incidents, ensuring the scene is safe, clearing the carriageway of debris, managing debris and supporting the emergency services.

They also deal with broken down and abandoned vehicles on the strategic road network, recovering vehicles that are causing a blockage or hazard, and ensure that the scene of an incident is safe, for road users and working partners.

For more information on the roles and responsibilities of a traffic officer go to our web page [Highways England's traffic officer service](#).

Over the Easter period, Highways England is removing some 300 miles of roadworks to make journeys better for drivers and their passengers. That means around 99 per cent of motorways and major A-roads will be roadworks-free in time for Easter.

And Highways England is also calling on drivers to do their bit and check their vehicle before setting off to avoid breakdowns, and keep the road network flowing freely.

Research shows almost half of all breakdowns are caused by simple mechanical problems which could be avoided with simple checks and nearly a quarter are caused by tyre problems.

Before setting off on journeys, motorists are advised to:

- check fuel: make sure you have enough to get to your destination.
- check tyres: check your tyre pressure and the condition of your tyres,

including the spare. Look out for cuts or wear and make sure the tyres have a minimum tread depth of 1.6mm, which is the legal limit.

- check engine oil: use your dipstick to check oil before any long journey, and top up if needed. Take your car back to the garage if you're topping up more than usual.
- check water: to ensure you have good visibility, always keep your screen wash topped up so you can clear debris or dirt off your windscreen.
- check your lights: if your indicators, hazard lights, headlights, fog lights, reverse lights or brake lights are not functioning properly, you are putting yourself at risk. In addition, light malfunctions can be a reason for your vehicle to fail its MOT.

Christian Morgan, South West operations manager for Highways England, said:

Traffic volumes increase in the South West during holiday periods and breakdowns and other incidents can cause issues on our network during these busy times.

Safety is our top priority and we advise all motorists to carry out a few simple vehicle checks before setting off over this period.

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.

[News story: Measles outbreaks in Europe: Easter travel advice](#)

Public Health England (PHE) is advising people planning to travel to Europe over the Easter holidays to ensure they are up to date with the MMR vaccine, due to ongoing measles outbreaks across the continent. Measles is a highly infectious viral illness that can lead to serious complications and in rare cases can be fatal.

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control has reported a high risk of measles in Europe, with cases being imported and exported between countries. This is largely due to lower MMR vaccine uptake in many European countries. Romania, Italy, Germany, Greece and France are all currently

experiencing large measles outbreaks.

Although the overall risk to the UK population is low, in England there have been 168 laboratory confirmed measles cases this year. London, South East, West Midlands and the South West regions have reported the most cases. About half of the cases in England in 2018 have been in people over 15 years of age.

Whilst MMR vaccine coverage for the routine childhood programme is high in the UK, anyone who has missed out on MMR vaccine or has not had measles in the past is at risk of catching the disease.

The vaccine is available to all adults and children who are not up to date with their 2 doses. It is offered to children at 1 year of age with a pre-school booster at 3 years and 4 months. Anyone who is not sure if they are fully vaccinated should check with their GP practice.

PHE local health protection teams are working closely with the NHS and local authorities to raise awareness of the outbreaks in the UK and other parts of Europe with health professionals and local communities.

Dr Mary Ramsay, Head of Immunisation at PHE, said:

The measles outbreaks we are currently seeing in England are linked to ongoing large outbreaks in Europe. People who have not had 2 doses of the MMR vaccine are particularly at risk.

We want to remind people that measles is not just a disease of young children and we're seeing many cases in people over 15 years of age. Adults or parents who are unsure if they or their children have been fully vaccinated should check with their GP and make an appointment to receive 2 doses of MMR vaccine.

The UK achieved WHO measles elimination status last year, so the overall risk of measles to the UK population is low. However due to ongoing measles outbreaks in Europe, we will continue to see cases in unimmunised individuals and limited onward spread can occur in communities with low MMR coverage and in age groups with very close mixing.

[News story: Home Office funds University of Bristol research into](#)

prostitution

As part of efforts by the government and law enforcement to better understand the nature of prostitution and sex work, the University of Bristol has been granted £150,000 to carry out a new research project. It follows the Home Affairs Select Committee's report on prostitution and will create an impartial evidence base covering the nature and prevalence of sex work in England and Wales.

Minister for Crime, Vulnerability and Safeguarding, Victoria Atkins said:

Our priority is to tackle the harm and exploitation that can be associated with prostitution and sex work, which is why it is so vital we have robust and impartial evidence to work from.

The University of Bristol's experience will help us build up a clear picture of its nature and prevalence and it forms one part of our work to make sure law enforcement have the right tools and guidance to help keep vulnerable people safe.

Formally commissioned by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales, the award follows an open tender process, during which researchers and academics were asked to submit proposals for developing a comprehensive understanding of contemporary prostitution and sex work.

University of Bristol Professor Marianne Hester OBE said:

We look forward to working with the Home Office and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner in Wales to carry out this important new research into the contemporary nature and measurement of prostitution and sex work.

We will also be linking with academics, non-government organisations and a range of agencies to ensure that the research reflects wider experiences and expertise.

The University of Bristol's research will help support law enforcement and government efforts to protect vulnerable people by assessing the different types of prostitution – such as on-street, off-street and online – its extent in England and Wales and any possible links to trafficking for the purposes of sex work.

The research will be carried out over the next year with the university engaging with a range of groups including sex workers, other academics, law enforcement and healthcare providers.

Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales, Emma Wools said:

In 2016, following the Home Affairs Select Committee report on prostitution, the government accepted that there was a need for further research on the nature and prevalence of prostitution in England and Wales – something we had already recognised here in South Wales.

It is clear that prostitution is evolving and it has never been more complex or multi-faceted than it is at this moment. We have worked closely with the Home Office to commission research to better inform understanding about prostitution and we are delighted that today the Home Office has formally announced that the University of Bristol will be undertaking this research.

News story: CMA tightens its approach to requests for internal documents

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is asking for comments from businesses and their legal representatives on guidance that explains when the CMA is likely to ask merging businesses to provide internal documents, and how they will be expected to respond. It also makes clear that the CMA is likely to use its compulsory information gathering powers as standard in future where internal documents are requested in merger investigations.

The guidance sets out a general tightening-up of the CMA's approach, and provides guidance on what steps businesses should take to respond to requests for internal documents fully and accurately. The more consistent use of the CMA's compulsory powers will help it to fine businesses where they fail to respond to requests without a reasonable excuse. These changes are designed to address concerns in some recent cases where businesses had failed to provide all the information requested, or provided it slowly.

It is also intends to provide further clarity about the CMA's likely approach, helping businesses that are considering transactions to plan more effectively for the merger review process.

The [consultation and draft guidance](#) is available for comment until 25 April 2018.