

Speech: Dr Phillip Lee's speech at Centre for Social Justice launch event

Thank you very much for inviting me along to this launch event today. Firstly can thank the team at Centre for Social Justice for this insightful report. It not only raises a number of pertinent points about the challenges which female offenders, and the services responding to them face, but also outlines practical and creative proposals we can take to tackle them.

Secondly, I would like to emphasise an important theme that runs throughout this report: the need for a multi-agency, gender-responsive approach to female offenders that brings together local and national partners in a coordinated and accountable manner.

Female offenders are some of our most vulnerable members of society and often have complex needs. As articulated in the report, a significant number of these women have histories of mental health issues, substance misuse, trauma and abuse, homelessness, poor education and unemployment.

For many, these issues have developed prior to their involvement with the criminal justice system. Many of these women are also likely to be already known to, or already engaged with, different public services before they even commit a crime.

Despite this, we know that outcomes for a significant number of women remain persistently and unacceptably poor.

We must address these issues at the outset if we want to reduce crime, reduce reoffending, protect victims and the public.

Achieving this requires a joined-up approach from the relevant Government departments, national and local statutory services, and the voluntary sector, to develop a coordinated, multi-agency response. I'm pleased to say we are making some real progress in achieving this. And, this is a principle that also underlines my female offender strategy.

Whole System Approach and women's centres

As set out in the report, we are investing £1 million pounds seed funding to support local areas to develop new ways of working with female offenders by adopting a multi-agency – often termed Whole System – approach.

The whole system model brings together local agencies, criminal justice, statutory and voluntary. Together they provide the holistic, targeted support a female offender needs, with shared investment and outcomes. The National Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Companies are key partners, ensuring that female offenders receive targeted, wrap-around support both through the gate and in the community.

Women's centres are often at the heart of many of these Whole-System Approach models. And I have been impressed by the women's centres that I have visited. Over the past year I met staff and service users at Nelson Trust and Anawim, which are both providing valuable support to vulnerable women.

I recognise the hugely important role that these women's centres can play in supporting female offenders and those at risk of offending. Our best response to female offending must be one that is locally-led.

Liaison and diversion

Another recent success commended in the report is that of Liaison and Diversion (L&D) services. L&D services place clinical staff at police stations and courts to provide assessments and referrals at an earlier stage. In doing so, we can intervene early to support people with mental health, drug and alcohol issues as soon as they come to the attention of the criminal justice system.

L&D services will be operating across 82% of England by the end of March 2018, and across 90% of the country by the end of March 2019. Full rollout is expected by 2020/21.

And we are going further. NHS England are currently enhancing 'women's pathways' across all L&D services, to address the specific needs of women in the criminal justice system.

A specific women's lead will be appointed in each service to focus on this. Services will:

- offer to see all females who come into custody
- provide females with the choice of the gender of their practitioner
- offer gender-sensitive tools for screening
- and provide effective onward referrals to gender specific and sensitive services.

The needs of particular groups such as women sex workers and foreign national women, will also be considered. These pathways will be co-designed with women with lived experience.

This will mean that more female offenders will be diverted away from the criminal justice system in the first place, away from charge, or to a community sentence. I firmly believe that early intervention is an important part of our response to female offending. Not only does it improve outcomes for these women but also their children, their families and the public as a whole.

Devolution

As the report outlines, Police & Crime Commissioners (PCC'S) have a real appetite to be more involved in a new approach for female offenders.

This is extremely welcome. PCCs play a valuable role as visible and accountable leaders of the local police and crime systems. And Combined

Authorities bring together several services which are crucial to reduce reoffending.

I recognise the potential benefits that a more locally-led system offers. I am keen to work closely with PCCs and Combined Authorities to explore this further.

It is crucial that we work more closely with these local partners to tackle the issues leading women into the criminal justice system.

To deliver this, we have signed devolution agreements with several areas, including Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, West Midlands and Greater London.

The Ministry of Justice is committed to exploring options to provide greater devolution of criminal justice responsibility and budgets to local commissioners.

Women at court

Another issue raised in the report was that of awareness of pre-sentence report writers of the disposals available in their areas. We have recently undertaken an audit of pre-sentence reports and assessment tools for female offenders at court. This looked at how we could take a more gender responsive and trauma informed approach towards the women we are working with.

Cross-departmental work is now progressing to increase the quality of assessments for female offenders and a work plan has been developed to take this work forward.

This work is also looking to increase the take up of effective community sentences in line with sentencing guidelines. This work is being carried out in partnership with the National Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC's).

Workforce development

However, for these changes to have the necessary impact, it is essential that we have a gender informed workforce.

We continue to roll out Trauma Informed training to criminal justice professionals. Training is now being extended across the National Probation Service and CRCs, as well as to prison staff.

We have also supported the wider Criminal Justice System roll out of the 'Safeguarding Children When Sentencing Mothers' training material completed by Dr Shona Minson.

This training raises awareness of the diverse implications of maternal imprisonment for children. I would like to reiterate my thanks to Dr Minson for her invaluable work.

Benefits and employment

Today's report also rightly highlights the challenges which prisoners face when leaving prison, particularly around access to welfare support.

Prisoners are able to speak to a Department of Work and Pensions Work Coach before release. They can make an appointment at the relevant Job Centre as early as the day of release. Once the former prisoner attends the Job Centre to complete their claim, eligible prisoners can receive funds within hours.

However, we recognise that more can be done. That is why we are working with the Department of Work and Pensions to improve the process with the aim of enabling a claim in advance of release.

And I want to do more to help women into employment on release too. Getting and keeping a job can change people's lives and work is the best route out of crime. The prison and probation service have an important role to help offenders build the skills and experience they need whilst they're in prison so they can have the right attitude for work and get a job when they're released. As the Secretary of State outlined on 6 March, we will shortly be launching our Education and Employment Strategy. This will set out our approach to helping offenders get the skills they need to find a job and avoid the activities that landed them in prison in the first place.

Accommodation

Another factor that plays an important part in rehabilitation is accommodation. There is considerable evidence which tells us there is a link between lack of stable accommodation and reoffending. Suitable accommodation plays an important part in enabling offenders to get a job, into training, or registered with a GP.

HMPPS has undertaken some initiatives to improve access to accommodation, such as expanding the BASS contract to offer accommodation to offenders on licence.

We continue to work with all probation providers to help make sure offenders get the support they need to find accommodation on release.

But accommodation is a serious problem which requires a cross departmental response, as recognised in the report's recommendations.

We are working with Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to improve access to housing for those being released from prison.

As part of this, we are investigating how Housing First and proposals regarding the private rented sector could help to ensure that offenders with complex needs, including female offenders, can secure suitable accommodation

This work will form part of the wider Government commitment to eliminate homelessness.

Conclusion

As you know, my female offender strategy is due shortly. I hope to outline in this what further progress we have made in the areas I have highlighted today, and others, to address the challenges which female offenders face. This is a complex issue and one that I want to get right.

Thank you for having me here today to support the launch of this report.

[Press release: Rocketing to success – Space Industry Act to unlock billions for the UK economy](#)

- Sam Gyimah announces 8 ground-breaking satellite projects that will transform society, including improving Electric Vehicle charging points
- Science Minister discusses pioneering commercial space opportunities for UK businesses during visit to the National Oceanography Centre in Southampton
- the UK is one step closer to becoming a leading destination for space flights, as the Space Industry Act receives Royal Assent

The government's plans to add billions of pounds to the UK economy and create hundreds of high-skilled jobs by unlocking opportunities in the new space age, were outlined by the Science Minister Sam Gyimah yesterday (Thursday 15 March).

Developing the UK space sector is a crucial aspect of the government's modern and ambitious [Industrial Strategy](#) and during a visit to the [National Oceanography Centre \(NOC\)](#) in Southampton, the Minister announced 8 ground-breaking satellite data projects, which will demonstrate the potential of using satellite technology to solve challenges faced by society.

As part of his visit, Sam Gyimah toured NOC's Marine Robotics Innovation Centre, which houses the Boaty McBoatface autosub

Part of the UK Space Agency's [Space for Smarter Government programme](#), the schemes include a project with Bournemouth Borough Council which will use satellite data and machine learning to map out where charge points for electric vehicles can be installed.

Other projects include using satellites to monitor and mitigate air pollution, enhancing healthcare and urban air quality management, and deploying satellites and drones in the battle against marine waste.

During his visit, the Science Minister Sam Gyimah said:

The UK is leading a new space race. 50 years ago countries were competing to send the first man to the moon, now the new race is on to develop the commercial space sector and spaceports.

Through the government's modern Industrial Strategy, we are laying the ground work to boost the UK's space sector with record investment in our world leading science sector. With the passing of the Space Industry Act, and the new satellite data projects, we are one step closer to launching satellites from UK soil and offering low gravity spaceflights from the UK.

The [Space Industry Act](#) is the most modern piece of space industry regulation anywhere in the world, enabling the first ever commercial space launch from UK soil. It will open up the universe to businesses, allowing them to better compete in the commercial space race using UK spaceports, and taking advantage of future developments, including hypersonic flight and high-speed point-to-point transport.

The passing of the Space Industry Act and the 8 new projects will open up a new space era for the UK ensuring it becomes a leading destination for space flight. In addition, companies will have greater access to commercial space opportunities, increasing the UK's share of the global space industry – currently 6.5% – and growing the sector which is currently worth £13.7 billion to the British economy.

[National Oceanography Centre \(NOC\)](#) is part of the Natural Environment Research Council, and houses the infamous Boaty McBoatface autosub and other equipment used for research under the sea.

[News story: VisitEngland Appointment](#)

FIONA POLLARD

Fiona Pollard runs her own events company and also sits on several boards.

After a career in the city working in the derivatives sector with a number of international banks, Fiona ran the Hop Farm Country Park in Kent until 2006. She still has close connections with the County organising the Leeds Castle Classical Concert each summer. She is a former Board member of SEEDA and the Kent Messenger group of radio stations as well as being a founder member of the Kent Tourism Alliance and one of the original Trustees behind Turner Contemporary.

Following several years living in Australia, Fiona has recently returned to the UK and now lives in Bath where she is on the Board of the Roman Baths, one of the most visited tourist attractions in England.

ALLAN LAMBERT

Allan Lambert has a proven track record within the UK Travel & Tourism sector. He has gained wide ranging experience in a number of senior leadership roles within many of the leading private and publicly owned UK holidays providers. Allan is the Managing Director – Property & Portfolio for Wyndham Vacation Rentals UK, encompassing Cottages.com and Hoseasons. Previous roles include Managing Director, Blue Chip Holidays and senior Commercial and Marketing roles within Bourne Leisure Ltd – Haven Holidays, Warner Leisure Hotels and Butlins.

Allan is an ambassador for the charity Family Holiday Association and holds no other public appointments.

The roles are remunerated at £275 for 1.5 days a month. This appointment has been made in accordance with the Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments. The appointments process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Under the Code, any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years must be declared. This is defined as including holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation, or candidature for election. Both Fiona and Allan have declared no such political activity.

[News story: Historic Royal Palaces reappointment](#)

Rupert Gavin is a well-established figure in the world of business, media and the arts. From 2005-2014 he was CEO of Odeon and UCI Cinemas Group, building it to be the largest cinema company in Europe. Prior to this, he was CEO of BBC Worldwide for seven years, during which time he was responsible for all global commercial activities, including TV channels, co-productions, magazines, books and home entertainment, was recipient of the Queen's Award for Exports, and a member of the BBC's Executive Committee. Other senior business appointments have included: Managing Director, Consumer Division of British Telecom, Deputy Managing Director of Dixons Stores Group and Board Director of Virgin Mobile. For many years, Mr Gavin was a director and shareholder of The Ambassador Theatre Group, now the most substantial theatre company in the world. He has produced/co-produced over 100 theatre productions since 1981, many of them award-winning. He has also served as Governor of the National Film and Television School, and Treasurer of the Contemporary Art Society. Currently, Mr Gavin is a board director of Wyevale Garden Centres, a board director of Countrywide plc, executive chairman of his West End theatre producing company Incidental Colman, chairman of Theatre CoProductions Ltd., and Master of the Worshipful Company of Grocers. He has one other Ministerial appointment, as Chairman of the Arts and Media Honours

Committee. Mr Gavin has been Chair of the Historic Royal Palaces since May 2015.

The role is not remunerated. This appointment has been made in accordance with the Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments. The appointments process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Under the Code, any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years must be declared. This is defined as including holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation, or candidature for election. Rupert has declared no such political activity.

Press release: Joint Statement following the second UK-Bangladesh Strategic Dialogue

The dialogue involved a fruitful exchange of views on political and bilateral issues, economic and development cooperation, security and defence cooperation, and exchanges on current global issues, including the Rohingya crisis. The UK commended Bangladesh for hosting over one million forcibly displaced Burmese nationals. Bangladesh welcomed the UK's assurance that it remains committed to keeping the international spotlight on the Rohingya crisis, and to supporting Bangladesh in its humanitarian response and the voluntary, safe, and dignified return of the Rohingya to Burma.

The Strategic Dialogue was led by Permanent Under-Secretary of the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Sir Simon McDonald, and his Bangladeshi counterpart, Foreign Secretary Md. Shahidul Haque of the Bangladesh Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The meeting began with both sides noting the success of the inaugural Strategic Dialogue in Dhaka last year, and welcoming the progress made in bilateral relations. Both sides underscored the importance of an exchange of visits and interactions at the highest political level, including the visit of the UK's Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to Bangladesh in February 2018. Both sides briefed on their countries' political developments domestically and internationally.

The UK restated its commitment to maintain a high quality service for Bangladeshi nationals at the visa application centres in Dhaka and Sylhet. The UK looked forward to early implementation of the Cross-Border Higher Education Rules which will allow UK universities to operate in Bangladesh.

Both countries agreed on the importance of education for women and girls. The UK welcomed the significant progress Bangladesh has made in this area.

The UK welcomed Bangladesh's continued commitment to take back its citizens who no longer have the right to remain in the UK, and welcomed significant progress in this regard.

The UK congratulated Bangladesh for being on course to graduating to middle income country status. It welcomed Bangladesh's efforts and commitment to improving performance against the World Bank's "Doing Business Index". Both sides agreed that trade was an important tool in tackling poverty, and that increasing bilateral trade could bring significant benefits to both countries.

The UK encouraged Bangladesh to continue addressing human and labour rights issues, in the garment industries.

Both sides affirmed their strong commitment to the implementation of the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" including Sustainable Development Goals. The UK and Bangladesh reiterated the importance of coordinated global action on climate change and reaffirmed their strong support for early and effective implementation of the Paris Agreement of 2015.

Both sides agreed to work closely in support of Prime Minister May's goal to cultivate a new, global and co-ordinated approach to eliminate forced, labour, modern forms of slavery and human trafficking.

The UK and Bangladesh reaffirmed their support for the Commonwealth and looked forward to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting to be held in London in April 2018.

Both sides agreed to arrange appropriate celebrations in London and Dhaka in 2022 to mark the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the UK and Bangladesh.

Commenting on the Strategic Dialogue, Sir Simon McDonald said:

I was glad to host the second Strategic Dialogue with my Bangladesh counterpart Md. Shahidul Haque in London. We held good discussions across a range of high priority areas for both the UK and Bangladesh.

The Strategic Dialogue was held at an important juncture for both countries as the UK prepares to leave the European Union and Bangladesh advances to middle income country status. I repeated the UK's commitment to continue tariff-free market access for Bangladeshi goods entering the UK market after the UK leaves the European Union.

The UK looks forward to welcoming Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Summit which takes place in

London next month.

Commenting on the Strategic Dialogue, Md. Shahidul Haque said:

The second Strategic Dialogue provided us an important opportunity to discuss how both sides can encourage transition to a broader relationship between the UK and Bangladesh in the post-Brexit and post-LDC context. We agreed to planning now for a future development partnership focussed on innovation, knowledge, skills development and employment while continuing to ensure that no-one is left behind, especially women, girls, and people with disabilities.

We appreciated the UK Government's firm commitment to continue to provide duty-free, quota-free market access to Bangladeshi goods to the UK market after it left the European Union. We highlighted the valuable contribution that the British-Bangladeshi community continues to contribute to British society and prosperity.

Notes to Editors:

1. This was the second Strategic Dialogue between the United Kingdom and Bangladesh. The first Strategic Dialogue was hosted by Bangladesh in March 2017. The second Strategic Dialogue took place at the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The third Strategic Dialogue will be held in Dhaka in 2019.
2. The UK is Bangladesh's largest bilateral development partner.
3. The UK will host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Summit in London from 16-20 April.