

## [Press release: Foreign Office Minister marks second anniversary of Boris Nemtsov's murder](#)

Minister for Europe, Sir Alan Duncan, urges Russia to bring all those responsible for the murder of Boris Nemtsov to justice

Boris Nemtsov, a former Deputy Prime Minister and leader of Russia's opposition, was shot dead two years ago on 27 February 2015. The suspected murderers are currently on trial, with verdicts expected in March, but there are concerns that the investigation has not pursued leads into who ordered the assassination.

Minister for Europe and the Americas, Sir Alan Duncan, said:

Boris Nemtsov was a man of great stature, who was admired in the UK for his essential and courageous work in promoting democracy. I urge the Russian government to ensure that all those responsible for this appalling crime are brought to justice. Like many in Russia and the international community, the UK government is continuing to follow developments closely.

### **Further information**

---

## [News story: GLD signs landmark Pro Bono Charter](#)

The Government Legal Department is one of the 21 founding signatories of the Law Society's landmark [Pro Bono Charter](#).

Stephen Braviner Roman, Director General at GLD, said:

I'm really pleased that GLD was one of the first to sign up to the Pro Bono Charter. By being a founding signatory, we are showing that we take our pro bono commitments seriously. We have made real strides over the past year in our pro bono activity, and I am sure that with the support of our new Pro Bono and Volunteering Network, this will continue to go from strength to strength.

Law Society president Robert Bourns said:

Solicitors do a huge amount of unsung pro bono work, providing voluntary, free legal services to those who cannot afford them or access legal aid. This ranges from supporting law centres or providing pro bono legal advice to charities, through to smaller firms giving free advice to clients who are unable to pay.

---

## [Press release: 'Regulator ready' stem cell lines now available for clinical development](#)

The stem cell lines are produced and quality-controlled under European regulation and are therefore suitable for use as starting materials in manufacturing therapies for clinical trials, saving researchers precious time and effort.

The UKSCB is a world leading not-for-profit pluripotent stem cell bank distributing stem cell lines qualified for use in clinical trials. Each cell line will be supplied with a certificate of analysis and we are in the process of compiling a starting materials dossier for each of our cell lines which will be available in the near future.

The UKSCB is a trusted supplier of stem cell lines with the highest quality and standards of due diligence and is a favoured partner in stem cell research.

Dr Christian Schneider, Director of NIBSC said:

Regenerative medicines are a game-changer – they have the potential to fully repair damaged tissues and organs, offering new solutions and hope for people with conditions that could not previously be cured.

At the heart of regenerative medicines are stem cells, as they can generate cells to repair many different tissues and open the door to novel therapies for currently untreatable disease.

Professor Glyn Stacey, Director of UKSCB said:

In partnership with our depositors we are at the forefront of

innovation, making a panel of EUTCD-grade stem cell lines available for the development of clinical therapies.

Our stem cell lines will be a significant step forward in getting regenerative medicines onto the market.

Dr Rob Buckle, Chief Science Officer at the Medical Research Council, which co-funds the UKSCB, said:

The availability of EUTCD-grade human embryonic stem cell lines via the UKSCB provides an invaluable 'gold standard' starting material; ensuring high quality and ethically-sourced stem cells are widely available to the research community to use in human clinical studies.

We are delighted to see this investment now bearing fruit, bringing us ever closer to realising the potential of regenerative medicine in treating the many diseases that currently have no cure.

## Background

1. Funded by the Medical Research Council (MRC) and Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), the UK Stem Cell Bank (UKSCB) was established in 2003, at the National Institute for Biological Standards and Control (NIBSC).
2. The UKSCB is licensed by the UK Human Tissue Authority under the requirements of the EU Tissue and Cells Directive (EUTCD) to supply stem cells for development of human therapies.
3. The [UK Stem Cell Bank](#) is a centre of the [National Institute for Biological Standards and Control \(NIBSC\)](#). NIBSC is a centre of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency which also includes the [Clinical Practice Research Datalink \(CPRD\)](#). The Agency is an executive agency of the Department of Health. [www.mhra.gov.uk](http://www.mhra.gov.uk).
4. Stem cell lines from the [Centre for Stem Cell Biology](#) (University of Sheffield), [North West Embryonic Stem Cell Centre](#)/University of Manchester Clean Rooms and [King's College London will undergo a phased release across spring and summer 2017](#). Further stem cell lines from [Newcastle University](#) and [Roslin Cells Ltd](#) are undergoing due diligence review as a preliminary to the production and release of cell lines later in 2017.

---

## Press release: Cabinet office: new senior appointments and changes

Sir Mark Lyall Grant will retire from the Civil Service and his role as National Security Adviser on 13 April 2017.

He will be succeeded by Mark Sedwill who is currently the Permanent Secretary at the Home Office. Philip Rutnam will in turn move from the Department for Transport to become the new Permanent Secretary at the Home Office.

Commenting on Sir Mark's retirement the Prime Minister said:

I would like to thank Mark Lyall Grant for his long years of public service, in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, at the United Nations and also in particular for his work since 2015 as National Security Adviser. Mark has made a huge contribution and I wish him every success for the future.

The Prime Minister added:

Mark Sedwill's experience means that he is ideally qualified to take up the critically important role of National Security Adviser. As well as his recent time in the Home Office, he has served in both Afghanistan and Pakistan and has wide-ranging experience of foreign and security policy issues.

The Home Secretary said:

I would like to thank Mark Sedwill for his distinguished tenure as Permanent Secretary of the Home Office. He has worked hard to achieve our mission to cut crime, prevent terrorism, control immigration and protect the vulnerable. His dedicated public service has helped keep our citizens safe and our country secure. I know he will continue that mission in his new role.

And I am delighted to announce Philip Rutnam's appointment as Permanent Secretary at the Home Office. Philip brings a wealth of leadership and delivery experience, including working on major projects and addressing the long term needs of the UK. I look forward to working with him when he takes up his new role.

Sir Jeremy Heywood, Cabinet Secretary, echoed the comments from the Prime

Minister and Home Secretary, paying tribute to Sir Mark's time as National Security Adviser, and welcoming Mark Sedwill and Philip Rutnam to their roles:

Mark Lyall Grant's work over recent years, in the Cabinet Office and before that the UN, has been immensely important in promoting the UK's national interests and keeping this country secure. He has served with great distinction two Prime Ministers and the National Security Council, providing strong leadership to the whole national security team. I thank him for his service and wish him all the very best for the future.

I congratulate Mark Sedwill and Philip Rutnam on their new roles, and look forward to working closely with them. They are both experienced Permanent Secretaries with a strong track record of leadership and achievement.

A Civil Service Commission-led competition has been launched today to find a successor to Philip Rutnam.

Jonathan Moor, Director General for Resources and Strategy at the Department for Transport, will be acting Permanent Secretary at the Department of Transport from 3 April, until a successor is in post.

---

## **[Press release: One month to go until new vehicle tax rates come into force](#)**

DVLA is reminding motorists that there is just one month to go until new vehicle tax rates come into force for all cars and some motor homes that are first registered from 1 April 2017.

Rohan Gye, DVLA Vehicle Service Manager, said:

These changes won't affect any vehicles that are registered before 1 April 2017. So, for anyone who already owns a car or is thinking of buying a used car the rates of vehicle tax will not be changing. However, anyone considering buying a new car that will be first registered from 1 April should check the [vehicle tax rates table](#) on GOV.UK to find out how much they'll pay.

Under the changes, vehicle tax for the first year will continue to be based on CO2 emissions. After the first year, the amount of tax to pay will depend

on the type of vehicle. The new rates are:

- £140 a year for petrol or diesel vehicles
- £130 a year for alternative fuel vehicles (hybrids, bioethanol and LPG)
- £0 a year for vehicles with zero CO2 emissions

In addition, for vehicles with a list price of more than £40,000, the rate of tax is based on CO2 emissions for the first year. After the first year, the rate depends on the type of vehicle (petrol, diesel, zero emission etc) and an additional rate of £310 a year for the next 5 years. After those 5 years, the vehicle will then be taxed at one of the standard rates (£140, £130 or £0) depending on the vehicle.

There is also [further information](#) available on the changes.