

Press release: Foreign Secretary appoints new GCHQ Director

Today Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson announced that Jeremy Fleming has been appointed to succeed Robert Hannigan as Director GCHQ, with the agreement of the Prime Minister.

Jeremy Fleming has been Deputy Director General of MI5 since 2013. He will succeed Robert Hannigan, who announced in January his decision to step down once a successor was in place. He will take up his post around Easter. The appointment was made following a recruitment process chaired by National Security Adviser Sir Mark Lyall Grant.

Announcing the appointment, the Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said

Jeremy Fleming is a dedicated public servant whose work over two decades in the intelligence services has helped to keep our country safe. I congratulate Jeremy on his appointment as Director of GCHQ at an important time for the service. I know that he will continue the excellent work of Robert Hannigan in leading this outstanding organisation, when the skill and ingenuity of the UK intelligence community are critical to defending Britain from cyber attacks, terror plots and other activities that threaten us and our allies.

National Security Adviser Sir Mark Lyall Grant said:

Jeremy Fleming emerged from a strong and competitive field as the outstanding candidate to become the next Director, GCHQ. He is a national security professional of the highest standard, who is widely respected across the national security community, in the UK and overseas. I would also like to thank Robert Hannigan for his excellent leadership of GCHQ over the last 3 years, including for the important role he played in preparations for the 2017 Investigatory Powers Act and in the setting up of the National Cyber Security Centre.

New GCHQ Director, Jeremy Fleming said:

It is a great privilege to be asked to lead GCHQ as it approaches its centenary in 2019. The organisation has a distinguished past and an increasingly important role to play in keeping Britain safe in the digital age. From managing cyber risks posed by nation states to preventing terror attacks, keeping our children safe online and supporting our Armed Forces, the exceptional men and women of GCHQ operate on the new frontline of global challenges.

I'd like to pay tribute to Robert Hannigan, who over the last few years has led GCHQ through the transformation of some of our most important national security capabilities. I look forward to building on his legacy and in particular, the role he has played in increasing the transparency of GCHQ's crucial work and in expanding its cyber mission through the work of the National Cyber Security Centre.

Outgoing GCHQ Director, Robert Hannigan said:

I'm delighted that the Foreign Secretary has appointed Jeremy Fleming to be the new Director. I've known Jeremy for many years and he is a great friend and colleague. He comes with deep intelligence experience and expertise.

Notes to editors

- Jeremy Fleming biography: Jeremy Fleming joined government from the private sector in 1993. He is a career MI5 officer with significant professional experience of national security and intelligence work, including international and Northern Ireland counter-terrorism, counter-espionage, cyber, and protective security. Jeremy joined the Board of MI5 in 2005 with responsibility for Technology. He was seconded to the Home Office in 2007 to be the Director of Strategy for the newly formed Office for Counter Terrorism and led on the revision of the Government's counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST. On return to MI5, he became the Director for intelligence Collection, overseeing a significant uplift in digital capabilities. He was promoted to Assistant Director General in 2011 and led MI5's preparations for the London 2012 Olympics. Jeremy was appointed Deputy Director General of MI5 in April 2013, with responsibility for the agency's core operational work. He has played a lead role in shaping the organisation to disrupt the changing face of the threat from terrorist groups and hostile state actors.
- All questions should be directed to GCHQ press office: 01242 221461 ext 33847; pressoffice@gchq.gsi.gov.uk

Further information