

[Press release: Salisbury attack: statement following British Ambassador's meeting with Russian government](#)

An FCO Spokesperson said:

Our Ambassador in Moscow has just been informed by the Russian government that they will expel 23 diplomats, close the British Consulate-General in St Petersburg and close the British Council in Moscow.

This follows the action we have taken, alongside other measures, to dismantle the Russian espionage network operating in the UK as a consequence of the attempted assassination of two people here in Britain using a nerve agent.

In light of Russia's previous behaviour, we anticipated a response of this kind and the National Security Council will meet early next week to consider next steps. Our priority today is looking after our staff in Russia and assisting those that will return to the UK.

Russia's response doesn't change the facts of the matter – the attempted assassination of two people on British soil, for which there is no alternative conclusion other than that the Russian State was culpable. It is Russia that is in flagrant breach of international law and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We have no disagreement with the people of Russia and we continue to believe it is not in our national interest to break off all dialogue between our countries but the onus remains on the Russian state to account for their actions and to comply with their international obligations.

[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.

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he 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.

[News story: Successful workshop on allergen detection in spices organised by GC](#)

A joint Defra, FSA, FSS and Government Chemist workshop was held at LGC on 28 February 2018. The event focused on the detection of allergens in spices and herbs using a multi-discipline approach. The workshop was attended by over 20 delegates from Public Analyst laboratories, industry and regulating bodies.

The event was organised by the Government Chemist team as part of a cross government (BEIS, FSA, FSS and Defra) knowledge transfer project that will deliver knowledge from government programmes to stakeholders to help enforce current regulations and prevent future disputes. By pooling funds from each of the four government departments, knowledge transfer events can be planned and coordinated according to priorities received directly from the stakeholder community delivering greater impact.

The workshop was opened with a talk by Dr Chun-Han Chan from the FSA's Allergen team and followed by Greg Corbishley from Barts Spices, who gave the industry perspective into the challenges posed for manufactures by cross contamination. There were also three sessions covering the complementary techniques developed in response to the [cumin](#) and [paprika](#) cases in 2015. Malvinder Singh (LGC) talked about the immunoassay tests which initially detected allergenic contamination (initially believed to be almond) in cumin and the subsequent preparation of reference materials needed for further investigation. Christopher Hopley (LGC) gave an overview of mass spectrometry and expanded on methods developed for the detection of close species. Timothy Wilkes (LGC) talked about the real-time PCR and melting curve approaches used for these cases. These sessions provided practical information required to enable participants to carry out or commission similar analytical tests. Michael Walker, from the GC team, provided a final overview on result interpretation and reporting on allergen cases.



Dr Walker from the GC team presenting on interpretation and reporting

Feedback from participants was very positive:

First of all many thanks to you all for a very enjoyable course on Wednesday. The content was very useful and I feel the chance to network with such a diversity of people and disciplines that attend these courses is invaluable

Very informative and enjoyable. Always good to have access to a large pool of experts. Confident now to use melt curve analysis in future

If you would like to know more about the techniques covered in this workshop, or the work of the Government Chemist, contact

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Teddington
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Email

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Press release: CEO Sir Alan Massey retiring after four-decade maritime career

Sir Alan joined the MCA in July 2010 after a 33-year career with the Royal Navy, where he left as Second Sea Lord.

During his eight-year tenure, Sir Alan has successfully steered the MCA through changes to modernise Her Majesty's Coastguard, new arrangements for the UK's search and rescue helicopter capability, a transformed survey and inspection capability and a more commercially-responsive approach to how the UK Ship Register operates. Sir Alan will continue his role until late 2018, to allow the appointment process for a successor to take place.

Bernadette Kelly, Permanent Secretary of the Department of Transport said: "I want to thank Sir Alan for his leadership of the MCA and his tireless commitment to improving safety at sea for all and supporting the UK's maritime interests. I know that he will continue to make an exemplary contribution to the MCA and its ambitious plans until he leaves his post later this year."

Sir Alan said: "It has been an immense privilege to work for the MCA and serve the public. I am extremely proud of what we have achieved. Whilst this has been a difficult decision for me to make, I feel that now is the right time for a new Chief Executive to bring a fresh perspective, new ideas and initiatives to the Agency. I'm confident that the MCA will continue to successfully deliver its objectives under new leadership. I will continue to lead the MCA with my full commitment and energy until my successor is found and is ready to take over towards the end of this year."

The Department of Transport will launch a competition to recruit a new Chief Executive on Monday 19 March.

News story: Daz beats bullies to lead

England's boxers at Commonwealth Games

Sick of unpleasant comments and the threat of violence hanging over him, 10-year-old Daz Chapple took up the contact sport at his local gym in Saltash, Cornwall so he could look after himself.

Now, almost 40 years later, Daz, who is based at Defence, Equipment and Support (DE&S), the government's procurement agency based at MOD Abbey Wood in Bristol, has been selected as Team Leader of Team England.

At the Gold Coast next April he will lead out 12 of the country's most talented amateur boxers, fully expecting them to bring back a haul of medals.

Daz, who lives in Bristol, said:

I came from a tough background, was bullied at school and decided I needed to protect myself.

I saw an advert at my school, which happened to have a national schoolboy champion at the time, and I decided there was no reason I couldn't follow in his footsteps.



Daz recently met the Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson

As soon as he started training, Daz fell in love with the sport and went on

to make several national semi-finals in the 51kg division.

At 18 he joined the RAF as an aerial erector and walked straight into the RAF boxing team.

After being posted to Germany for four years he returned to the UK and to the ring but, such was his love for the sport, soon found himself juggling being a boxer, coach and team manager as well as having to fulfil all his commitments in his role with the Armed Forces.

Daz, who recently met the Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson during a visit to DE&S, said:

The military has been very good to me. I put in a lot of extra hours but there are not many places you can work that would allow you the time or flexibility to be able to do this role.

In 2007 Daz applied successfully for a role of England Boxing Team Manager and is now Director England Boxing, (Director of Talent and Performance and GB Talent Commission).

Over the years Daz has witnessed hundreds of bouts – one of which he particularly remembers.

He said:

I actually managed Tyson Fury's first fight as an amateur which took place in the Officers' mess hall at RAF Wyton in Cambridgeshire. He was so tall and had such a long reach the other guy could not get near him. He was fast too which singled him out. He has done well for himself.



Daz Chapple (left) in a boxing match in his youth

For Daz the single moment that stands out is being given the prestigious appointment of Team Leader and being asked to lead out Team England Boxing at the forthcoming Commonwealth Games.

He said:

It is an absolute honour for me. I have dedicated my life to boxing and to be asked to lead the team out in Australia is incredible. It just doesn't get any better.

We have an incredibly strong team and I believe we will be very successful.