

## [News story: Help shape the development of a new Online-filing service for CICs](#)

*Updated:* Rewording of piece

Are you a Community Interest Company (CIC) or an Agent who files on behalf of one?

- Would you like to help shape the development of a new service to allow CICs to file their annual report and accounts online?
- We are looking for CICS & Agents to participate in user testing our new online filing service at Companies House, Cardiff.
- The testing will take approximately an hour and will help make the new service fit for the needs of CICs and their Agents.

If you are interested in taking part please email [surveys@companieshouse.gov.uk](mailto:surveys@companieshouse.gov.uk) for further details.

---

## [Press release: Crackdown on private landlords renting overcrowded and dangerous homes](#)

Measures to improve overcrowded and dangerous living conditions of private tenants in shared homes were laid before Parliament today (15 March 2018) by Housing Minister Heather Wheeler.

Councils are being given tough new powers to tackle the small minority of rogue landlords who rent out overcrowded properties and impose fines of up to £30,000 for those landlords who do not comply.

From October councils will be able to set minimum bedroom size standards and also introduce limits on how many people can live in each bedroom of a licenced multiple occupancy home. Councils will be able to use national minimum standards or apply even tougher requirements in order to address specific local needs.

This move will help ensure tenants have the space they need and deserve as well as reduce health and safety risks they face by sharing cooking and washing facilities with too many people.

The new standards will apply to all landlords seeking new licences. Landlords of existing properties will be given up to 18 months to make necessary changes when re-applying for a licence when it expires.

In a move to stop rubbish piling up outside some shared rented homes, often presenting health risks and blighting neighbourhoods, landlords will also be required to provide adequate waste storage facilities in line with their local authority's rules. If they fail to do so they could face a fine.

These latest measures build on wider government action to drive up standards in the private rented sector by tackling bad landlords. This includes the launch of a new database of rogue landlords and introduction of banning orders for the worst offenders coming into force next month.

Minister Heather Wheeler said:

Everyone deserves a decent and safe place to live. But some tenants are being exploited by a minority of unscrupulous landlords who profit from renting out cramped and sometimes squalid or dangerous properties.

Today's measures will mean landlords must provide adequate space for their tenants or face a hefty fine. It is part of a raft of new powers for councils to crack down on rogue landlords and comprehensive action we are taking to improve conditions for private tenants.

Last month new legislation was introduced requiring more landlords to obtain a licence from their council. Landlords of 1 and 2-storey multiple occupancy properties will be brought within scope of mandatory licensing requirements across England, affecting roughly 160,000 additional properties.

## **Further information**

### **Minimum space requirements**

- Rooms used for sleeping by 1 person over 10 will have to be no smaller than 6.51 square metres, and those slept in by 2 people over 10 will have to be no smaller than 10.22 square metres. Rooms slept in by children of 10 years and younger will have to be no smaller than 4.64 square metres.
- The licence must specify the maximum number of persons (if any) who may occupy any room and the total number across the different rooms must be the same as the number of persons for whom the property is suitable to live in.

### **Extended scope of mandatory house in multiple occupation licensing**

- National mandatory licensing currently only applies to houses in

multiple occupation that have 3 or more storeys and occupied by 5 or more people. It is being extended to cover one/two storey houses in multiple occupation which are occupied by 5 or more people.

## **Waste Storage**

- The government has re-affirmed the need for councils to provide comprehensive and frequent household waste collections which are free at the point of use. Councils should not seek to impose backdoor waste charging of residential properties, including houses in multiple occupation.

## **Banning orders and landlord database**

A small number of rogue or criminal landlords knowingly rent out unsafe and substandard accommodation.

The [Housing and Planning Act 2016](#) introduced a range of measures to tackle rogue landlords:

- civil penalties of up to £30,000 as an alternative to prosecution – came into force April 2017
- extension of Rent Repayment Orders to cover illegal eviction, breach of a banning order or failure to comply with a statutory notice – came into force April 2017
- banning orders for the most serious offenders – to be implemented in April 2018
- a database of rogue landlords/letting property agents convicted of certain offences – to be implemented in April 2018

## **Office address and general enquiries**

2 Marsham Street

London  
SW1P 4DF

Contact form

<http://forms.communiti...>

General enquiries: please use this number if you are a member of the public  
030 3444 0000

## **Media enquiries**

Email

[newsdesk@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:newsdesk@communities.gsi.gov.uk)

Please use this number if you're a journalist wishing to speak to Press

Office  
0303 444 1209

## Social media – MHCLG

Twitter – <https://twitter.com/mhclg>

Flickr – <http://www.flickr.com/photos/mhclg>

LinkedIn – <http://www.linkedin.com/company/mhclg>

---

# [News story: UK aid provides healthcare and education to Palestinian refugees](#)

The UK is supporting the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) to help educate 500,000 children and provide health services for 3 million Palestinian refugees, including those affected by the brutal conflict in Syria.

Speaking at the Extraordinary Ministerial Conference on UNRWA in Rome today (Thursday 15 March), Middle East Minister Alistair Burt highlighted the UK's continuing commitment to supporting Palestinian refugees and called on other countries to do more to alleviate some of the current pressures the agency is facing. He welcomed reform efforts to date and encouraged UNRWA to continue the pace of cost-efficiency reform.

Mr. Burt confirmed that the UK will deliver its next round of financial support earlier than originally planned, to help meet the growing needs of Palestinian refugees across the region.

Minister Burt said:

The UK is unequivocally committed to supporting vulnerable Palestinian refugees by assisting in the provision of education and healthcare across the region which is a key part of our resolve to promote a two-state solution. UNRWA plays a unique and critical role in supporting regional stability, and it's absolutely right that Global Britain supports the sustainability of its services.

Today I'm calling on others to follow our lead to make sure that UNRWA's humanitarian and stabilising role continues uninterrupted. This is not just important for those Palestinians in need of aid, but also to maintain stability across the region which is in all of our interests.

## Notes to Editors

- Over the course of the 2017/2018 financial year, the UK has provided around £50 million to UNRWA to support the agency's delivery of food, education and healthcare to vulnerable Palestinians across the Middle East. This makes us one of the top five donors.
- The UK will provide at least £28 million to UNRWA next financial year, as previously outlined in our multi-year commitment to 2021.

---

## [Press release: Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Iran in April 2018](#)

Mr Rob Macaire CMG has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran in succession to Mr Nicholas Hopton who will be transferring to another Diplomatic Service appointment. Mr Macaire will take up his appointment in April 2018.

Commenting on the appointment, Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

Iran has an important role to play in the Middle East region, but it is essential that it does so in a constructive way – something I made clear during my visit to Tehran in December last year. The Iran deal, signed in 2015, was a huge diplomatic success. The product of years of patient and persistent diplomacy that extinguished the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran.

In that vein, I am pleased that Rob will be applying his wealth of international experience to the leading HMG's engagement in Tehran. We face challenges – including the ongoing cases of British dual-nationals detained in Iran – and areas for potential collaboration. I look forward to working with him across these areas.

Mr Macaire said:

I am honoured to be appointed the new British Ambassador to Iran. The UK's continued engagement with Iran is vital to our goal of making the Middle East region a safer and more stable place. I look forward to working with the Government of Iran and with international partners to preserve the nuclear deal and deepen our bilateral relationship, through constructive engagement on human rights, trade, and seeking political solutions to the conflicts in Yemen, Syria and elsewhere.

## **CURRICULUM VITAE**

Full name: Robert Macaire CMG

Married to: Alice Macaire

Children: Two

2016 – present Language Training

2011 – 2016 BG Group plc. Director of Government/Public Affairs and Political Risk

2008 – 2011 Nairobi, British High Commissioner

2006 – 2008 FC0, Director, Consular Services

2004 – 2006 New Delhi, Political Counsellor

2002 – 2004 FC0, Head, Counter Terrorism Policy Department

1998 – 2002 Washington, First Secretary, Middle East and Counter-terrorism

1998 FC0, Head of Sierra Leone Unit, Africa Directorate

1997 –1998 FC0, Head of Southern Africa Section, Africa Directorate

1996 – 1997 FC0, Head of MEPP Section, Near East and North Africa Department

1995 – 1996 FC0, Head of Levant Section, Near East and North Africa Department

1991 – 1995 Bucharest, Second Secretary (Know How Fund)

1990 FC0, Falkland Islands Department

## **Further information**

- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

## **Media enquiries**

For journalists

Email

[newsdesk@fco.gov.uk](mailto:newsdesk@fco.gov.uk)

Newsdesk

020 7008 3100

---

## [News story: Consultation into strengthening teacher-examiner safeguards](#)

Ofqual has today (14 March 2018) set out how it intends to strengthen its regulation of awarding organisations' involvement of teachers in the development of confidential assessment materials. Today's [consultation](#) reflects detailed analysis of existing processes and extensive discussions with awarding organisations, examiners, teachers, students and parents. The new regime, if confirmed, will extend to all regulated qualifications.

The proposals include:

- explicitly setting out in our rules steps awarding organisations must take to help protect the integrity of the assessments to which teachers have contributed; and
- publishing further statutory guidance to help awarding organisations understand the factors and approaches they should consider when deciding how to comply with the rules.

Consistent with these proposals, teachers will continue to be able to write assessments and have access to confidential materials. However, awarding organisations must maintain up to date records of all conflicts of interest relating to teachers who have seen confidential assessment materials. And they must review their safeguards such that they are appropriate and proportionate to:

- effectively mitigate the risks of using teachers in the development of assessment materials, for example by making sure no teacher knows whether or when any assessments they have developed will be used;
- support teachers to do the right thing, through appropriate training and contractual

obligations;

- detect malpractice, for example by sampling the work of teachers who have written exam papers to look for any unusual patterns of response.

We are also stressing that the way in which awarding organisations have regard to our guidance will be taken into account when deciding on the nature and scale of any regulatory action should a breach of confidentiality occur.

### **Timing**

The exam boards who deliver GCSEs, AS and A levels and other qualifications used as equivalents, such as the Pre-U have already written the exams for summer 2018.

Safeguards for 2018 will, therefore, need to focus on deterring and detecting malpractice

and on supporting teachers. These awarding organisations have published a joint statement

setting out their intentions for this summer.

Subject to the outcome of the consultation, and where necessary, we expect that all

awarding organisations will have made significant progress in terms of the safeguards they

employ by summer 2019, and have fully revised their approaches by 2020. This transition

period is necessary to avoid introducing an unacceptable degree of risk to the delivery of

safe qualifications.

### **Sally Collier said:**

“Almost universally, respondents to our call for evidence emphasised the importance of

retaining a strong link between teaching and examining, and the benefit it brings to

assessment design. Our rules on confidentiality and malpractice are already demanding.

The proposals we have put forward today build on them and provide greater clarity about our

expectations and the implications for awarding organisations if information about an

assessment is disclosed by a teacher who has been involved in its development. There is no

one-size-fits-all solution to the challenge of maintaining confidentiality.

However, the events

of summer 2017 showed how public confidence in assessments and, in turn, qualifications,

can be damaged if confidential information is wrongly used. It is essential that those who



take or otherwise rely on qualifications have upmost confidence in the outcomes.”

## **Background**

- In September 2017 we announced we would review:
- the risks and benefits of the long-established practice whereby some teachers who write or contribute to exam papers also teach the qualification; and
- the effectiveness of the safeguards used to reduce the risk of a teacher who has this dual role disclosing or otherwise misusing information about confidential assessments.

We are publishing a suite of research and analysis today that provides context and support to our consultation proposals.

### They include:

- a summary of our call for evidence into the benefits and risks of teachers being involved in the development of qualifications that they teach
- interviews with teacher-examiners about the risks and benefits of their involvement in developing assessment materials
- a review of safeguards used to prevent disclosure of confidential material in countries outside England
- a review of safeguards used to prevent disclosure of confidential material in countries outside England
- interviews with students studying for AS/A levels, and parents of secondary school aged children, to understand their views on teacher involvement in writing exams
- research into the sources of, and ways of identifying anomalous responses in test scores.

ENDS