

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

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[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
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- 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

[Press release: Highways England wants to hear your views](#)

The organisation is using the mobile visitor centre for the second year following 2017's successful trial to engage with the public, and will give road users and local residents the chance to speak to staff that will be coming to their area, starting with Essex and Suffolk throughout March.

The minibus facility will open out into a larger exhibition, which will feature displays and presentations about road works in the area and road safety.

Highways England Capital Delivery Team Leader, Aran Nugent, said:

We are aware that the work we do has an impact on our road users, and so Highways England is eager to better engage with drivers and local residents so we can hear their comments, allay their concerns and answer any questions they may come to us with.

This mobile exhibition offers us an excellent opportunity to better get into those communities we will be working alongside, so we can speak with people to explain the work we are doing and the benefits it will bring for them, their town and this region. Last year we had a good response with people coming along to learn about roadworks and share their views, so we hope that interest will continue and grow further in 2018.

In the last financial year (2017/18), Highways England spent £61.4 million on essential maintenance across the East, including £3.5 million on new noise barriers on the M40 in Buckinghamshire, £3.1 million for a new roundabout with Harwich Road and the A120 near Wix, and a £3.5 million repair to the accident damaged Saddlebow Interchange on the A47 near King's Lynn.

This essential maintenance work is in addition to the longer term investment work, including new dual carriageways on several sections of the A47, widening the A12 in Essex, the £1.5 billion Cambridge to Huntingdon A14 upgrade, and the £4.4 – £6.2 billion Lower Thames Crossing.

Now drivers will be able to speak to Highways England staff about this whole range of road works that are happening soon and further in the future, with £34.4 million committed to maintaining the East's roads over the next year.

In the next financial year (2018/19), Highways England's maintenance work will include £2.75 million on resurfacing the A14 between Newmarket and Bury St Edmunds, £2.5 million on bridge repairs on the M1, A14 and A1, £2.25 million on resurfacing the A12, and a further £2.24 million on replacing digital message signs on the same road. Our work in the next year will include laying enough tarmac to fill 20 football pitches, enough white lining to fill an Olympic swimming pool, and enough cats' eyes to reflect enough light collectively to be seen from space.

In March, the exhibition is set to visit:

- Boreham House on Thursday 15 and the town's Springfield Sainsbury's on Friday 16
- Chelmsford city centre (outside Barclays) on Monday 19 and Tuesday 20
- Lion Walk, Colchester town centre on Wednesday 21, Thursday 22
- Braintree Freeport on Friday 23
- Great Bromley Village Hall on Monday 26
- Bricklayer's Arms, Little Bentley on Tuesday 27
- Bypass Nurseries, Capel St Mary, on Wednesday 28
- Ipswich County Council (Russell Road) on Thursday 29

The exhibition will then head to Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire in April, before covering the A47 with Norfolk and Peterborough

in May.

These dates may be subject to change, and interested visitors are asked to stay up to date with the latest information by following @HighwaysEast on Twitter.

Members of the public are invited to attend the mobile visitor centre to speak with Highways England staff, which will include traffic officers at some of the exhibitions.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[News story: Annual Safety Review 2017 published](#)

The [Annual Safety Review](#) for 2017 contains information on the AAIB's activity during 2017 and includes an overview of the 29 Safety Recommendations and Safety Actions published in the 39 field and 220 correspondence investigation reports during the year.

It also includes statistical information on the accident causal factors established by AAIB investigations across the aviation industry. To complement this, there is an AAIB general aviation fatal accident review which looks at the causal trends and has links to further research papers, regulatory advice and other useful sources of information for the private aviator. There is also an article on human factors in accident investigation and how the AAIB is developing its capability in this important field.

[Press release: New government action to create stronger, more integrated](#)

Britain

- £50 million to support new Integrated Communities Strategy
- strategy includes bold proposals to boost English language skills, increase opportunities for women and promote British values in education

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid today (14 March 2018) set out an ambitious long-term plan of action to tackle the root causes of poor integration and create a stronger, more united Britain.

The [Integrated Communities Strategy green paper](#), to which £50 million will be committed over the next 2 years, seeks views on the government's bold proposals to boost English language skills, increase opportunities for more women to enter the workplace, and promote British values and meaningful discussion between young people.

Britain is on the whole, a well-integrated society, with 85% of people reporting a feeling of belonging strongly to Britain.

But the evidence, including [Dame Louise Casey's independent review into opportunity and integration](#), overwhelmingly points to a significant number of communities being divided along race, faith or socio-economic lines.

This reduces opportunities for people to mix with others from different backgrounds, allows mistrust and misunderstanding to grow, and prevents those living in isolated communities from taking advantage of the opportunities that living in Britain offers.

The strategy sets out a range of actions the government plans to take to bring divided communities together, including:

Boosting English language skills

We are proposing a new strategy to promote adoption of the English language across all communities in England, including a new community-based English language programme, a new network of conversation clubs, and support for local authorities to improve the provision of English language tuition for those who need it most.

Increasing economic opportunity, particularly for women

Jobcentre Plus will trial new approaches to support people from some of the most isolated communities into work through personalised skills training to address their individual needs.

Ensure that every child receives an education that prepares them for life in modern Britain

New proposals to ensure young people have the opportunity to mix and form lasting relationships with those from different backgrounds, promotion of British Values across the curriculum and increased take up of the national

citizen service.

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Britain can rightly claim to be one of the most successful diverse societies in the world. But we cannot ignore the fact that in too many parts of our country, communities are divided, preventing people from taking full advantage of the opportunities that living in modern Britain offers.

Successive governments have refused to deal with the integration challenges we face head on, preferring to let people muddle along and live isolated and separated lives.

We will put an end to this through our new strategy which will create a country that works for everyone, whatever their background and wherever they come from. Integration challenges are not uniform throughout the country, with different areas and communities having varying needs.

The government will work with 5 'Integration Areas' to develop local integration plans: Blackburn with Darwen; Bradford; Peterborough; Walsall and Waltham Forest.

These 5 local authorities have already demonstrated a keen grasp of the challenges they face and shown a desire to try new things and learn from what works. Learning from these areas about what works – and, just as importantly, what doesn't work – will be shared more widely as the programme develops.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

We want to make sure that all children learn the values that underpin our society – including fairness, tolerance and respect. These are values that help knit our communities together, which is why education is at the heart of this strategy.

It's also important that children are taught in a safe environment and that we can act quickly if children are at risk or being encouraged to undermine these values. Together, with Ofsted and communities across the country, we will build on the work already underway to achieve this.

We want to start a debate on the Integrated Communities Strategy, to find the most effective ways to address integration challenges. The consultation will run for 12 weeks to 5 June 2018.

Further measures included as part of the Integrated Communities Strategy:

Building stronger leadership

The strategy calls on leaders in national and local government, business and civil society to ensure all services have a strong focus on integration.

Supporting recent migrants to integrate into the community

We will provide a package of practical information for recent migrants in our integration areas to better help them understand and navigate British life, values and culture. We will also improve communities' ability to adapt to migration and manage pressures on local services and amenities in order to promote more effective integration.

Respecting and promoting equal rights

The strategy sets out new measures to empower marginalised women, including exploring reform of the law on marriage and religious weddings. We will support training of faith leaders to practice in the British context understanding British culture and shared values. We will also strengthen action to tackle hate crime and encourage greater reporting of incidents.

Building vibrant communities

An Integration Innovation Fund will be introduced to allow organisations to bid to test out new approaches to bring people from different backgrounds together and we will make better use of shared community spaces such as parks and libraries.

Further information

See the [Integrated Communities Strategy](#).

To deliver the vision set out in this strategy we recognise that we need to talk to individuals and communities to hear what they think the key issues are and how communities and local and national government can tackle them. The consultation period will run for 12 weeks.

85% of respondents felt that they belonged 'very' or 'fairly' strongly to Britain. Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, [Community Life Survey 2016-17](#).

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