

# Serving the Veteran better – MOD's Veterans UK welcomes veterans feedback on its services

News story

For MOD's Veterans UK, listening to and learning about how veterans access and experience their services is extremely important.



A veteran gets his point across during the event

At a recent Lived Experience event – an opportunity for small groups of veterans and their advocates to discuss their experiences – senior leaders and staff from across the organisation welcomed a cross section of veterans to share their feedback and suggestions directly.

The face-to-face event was held in late September with a group of veterans, and representatives from MOD Policy, Medical Advisors and operational and communications staff.

Nina Cope, MOD Chief Operating Officer (pictured left) talks to veterans during a break

Veterans UK is responsible for administering compensation and pensions schemes for both serving personnel, veterans and their families, as well as providing the Veterans Welfare and Defence Transition Services. The purpose of the event was to listen to the individuals and learn from their experiences of using these services and schemes.

This direct engagement forms part of our commitment to continuously improve and Veterans UK are now working with policy and other partners on the feedback received and how it can be used to inform the continuous improvement of the user experience.

Brigadier Caroline Hull (centre) facilitates the face-to-face Lived Experience Event

Brigadier Caroline Hull, Head of DBS Armed Forces and Veterans Services said:

“We know we need to be doing things better and whilst the teams in Veterans UK are working their hardest to get things right, this doesn’t always happen. We are here to learn, we are determined to improve, and we welcome the support of those who have voluntarily given up their time to support us.”

In Veterans UK we recognise there is more to be done as we continue to improve the experiences for serving personnel and veterans using our services. We want to be transparent and by sharing our processes is one way we have done that via the [Customer Journey Maps](#) and bite-size videos on [how to make a compensation claim](#). Similar helpful and informative products are planned for the rest of 2022 and beyond.

For updates on all Veterans UK led initiatives, follow @modveteransuk on Facebook.

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## [Ambassador Manley statement on Xinjiang](#)

World news story

Ambassador Simon Manley, Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva, made the below comments following the vote on whether the UN Human Rights Council should hold a debate on the situation of human rights in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China.



# UK Government

Ambassador Simon Manley, the UK's Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva, said:

Given the gravity of the report by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights which found that China has carried out serious human rights violations including possible 'crimes against humanity' in Xinjiang, it is important that UN members are given the opportunity to consider it fully. China's attempts to stifle debate and hide the truth will not succeed.

Today's vote sent a clear message to China: that a significant number of countries will not be silenced when it comes to egregious human rights violations – no matter where and by whom they are committed. We will continue to work with our partners to hold the Chinese authorities to account and to shine a spotlight on China's human rights violations.

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# Cocaine supplier receives increased sentence after hearing at the Court of Appeal

News story

The offender acted as a courier to drive 90kg of cocaine from Surrey to London



A man who acted as a courier to transport 90kg of cocaine has been ordered to serve a longer prison term after the Court of Appeal found his original sentence to be unduly lenient.

Sam Whicker, now 31, was part of an organised crime group involved in the supply of class A drugs (cocaine). Whicker acted as a courier and drove 90kg of cocaine from Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, to Northolt, West London.

In addition to this offence, Whicker also has 38 previous convictions for 71 offences.

On 6 July 2022, Whicker was sentenced to 4 years' imprisonment at Southwark Crown Court for being concerned in the supply of a class A drug (cocaine). Whicker was also ordered to forfeit the drugs and vehicle for destruction.

Following the sentencing, Whicker's sentence was referred to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme.

On 6 October 2022, the Court found Whicker's original sentence to be unduly lenient, and he was ordered to serve a new sentence of 5 years and 4 months' imprisonment.

Speaking after the hearing, HM Solicitor General Michael Tomlinson MP said:

Supplying class A drugs, especially given the significant quantity involved in this case, is an incredibly serious crime, so it was clear to me that a stronger sentence was appropriate in this case.

Today's verdict shows that no amount of money offered to supply and transport drugs will ever be worth it.

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## [UN Human Rights Council 51: General Comment on human rights in Xinjiang](#)

Mr President,

The United Kingdom has consistently raised the grave human rights situation in Xinjiang. We are not alone in our concerns. Indeed, since our first joint statement on this issue at the UN General Assembly back in 2019, the growing number of countries from around the world have spoken up – including here at the Human Rights Council.

We have heard concerns from elsewhere too. Special Procedure mandate holders, Treaty Bodies and Non-Governmental organisations have all repeatedly expressed alarm following numerous reports of gross violations and systemic discrimination over several years.

There has been no shortage of reports on Xinjiang. But the recently published assessment by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is the most significant to date. We now have a thorough, objective and independent assessment from the principle UN human rights body which confirms our worst fears.

If I may quote the exact words of the assessment – “the extent of arbitrary and discriminatory detention of members of the Uyghur and other predominantly Muslim groups may constitute international crimes, in particular crimes against humanity”.

These crimes include – torture, sexual and gender-based violence, forced sterilisations, severe restrictions on freedom of religion and belief and forced disappearances on a massive scale.

And what is all the more significant is that so many of those findings are based on official public information from the Chinese authorities – corroborated by other sources.

Our ask today is a simple one – a debate at the next session of this Council. Given the harrowing details and serious findings by the Office of the High Commissioner – this really is the minimum that an assessment of this nature should lead to.

So, Mr President, I urge us to remember why we are here. We are members of the Human Rights Council. We are here to raise situations of systemic discrimination. We are here to discuss the most serious human rights violations and abuses, wherever and by whomever they are committed. There can be no doubt that the gravity and scale of what has been reported in Xinjiang warrants such a debate.

I therefore appeal to our fellow members of this Council to do what is right. Not to turn a blind eye. But to support the decision simply to have a debate. No more, no less.

Thank you, Mr President.

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## [Change of His Majesty's Ambassador to Turkey: Jill Morris](#)

Press release

Ms Jill Morris CMG has been appointed His Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Türkiye.



Ms Jill Morris CMG has been appointed His Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Türkiye in succession to Sir Dominick Chilcott KCMG who will be retiring from the Diplomatic Service. Ms Morris will take up her appointment during January 2023.

Full name: Jill Morris

**2016 to 2022** Rome, Her Late Majesty's Ambassador to Italy and Her Late Majesty's Non-Resident Ambassador to San Marino

**2012 to 2015** FC0, Director, Europe

**2011** FC0, Head, Counter-Proliferation Department

**2008 to 2010** FC0, Head, Consular Strategy Department

**2006 to 2008** Brussels, Counsellor, UK Permanent Representation to the EU  
**2005 to 2006** Brussels, Desk Officer – External Relations, UK Permanent  
Representation to the EU  
**2001 to 2005** Nicosia, Second Secretary  
**1999 to 2000** FCO, Desk Officer, United Nations Department  
**1999** Joined FCO

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