

Lord Chancellor Swearing-in Speech: Brandon Lewis MP

I would like to thank the Lord Chief Justice for that warm welcome. I look forward to working with yourself and other members of the Bench during my time in office. As I look forward to working in Cabinet with you, Mr Attorney – and I would like to congratulate you on your re-appointment.

You bring with you not only your background as a respected barrister, but also your experience serving in the role during your predecessor's time on maternity leave. I have no doubt that you will carry out your duties as a Law Officer with both the diligence and dedication that you are renowned for.

And I'm also delighted to welcome my esteemed colleague, Michael Tomlinson, to his new role as Solicitor General.

As the Lord Chief Justice has described, your role is historic and vital to our democracy – providing essential support to the Attorney and overseeing the work of our prosecuting authorities.

I know you will bring the same commitment and enthusiasm to the role as you have throughout your parliamentary career.

It is a huge honour to become Lord Chancellor and join such a long – if slightly daunting – list of names that includes Cardinal Wolsey, Sir Francis Bacon and Ken Clarke. The patron saint of statesmen and politicians himself goes before me – Sir Thomas More is also one of my predecessors.

Like me, Sir Thomas was fortunate enough to be the Member of Parliament for the fantastic, stunning constituency of Great Yarmouth. He was famously beheaded for treason – so I'm hoping I cannot match that similarity!

Today is, of course, the culmination of a years-long journey for me. From being called to the bar in 1997. To getting elected as a councillor in 1998 and leading Brentwood Borough Council. All the way through to the point where I entered Parliament in 2010, my first ministerial posting in 2012 and the four departments in which I've served since.

I hope to bring all of that experience to this job, but I recognise that the English legal system does have about 900 years more experience than I do! Throughout that time it has evolved to offer a crucial mix of flexibility and reliability that guarantees citizens' rights and allows businesses to thrive and grow as well.

As we continue to pass it down through the generations, I hope to play my part in being both a good steward and a trustworthy custodian of English Law. That is why I take my responsibility to respect its enduring principle, the Rule of Law, so incredibly seriously.

The idea that everyone is equal before the law and that public authorities

must act lawfully is the foundation of our society. It guarantees freedom and fairness in a modern democracy like ours. And we must always be aware that it is not guaranteed and therefore must be protected.

Judges are at the forefront of that work to safeguard the Rule of Law in our justice system, and I will do all I can to defend their judicial independence. I'm clear that the work of our judiciary matters...

...As does the work of our world-leading legal professionals, who are also represented here today. Together they not only deliver justice, they each play a crucial role in the evolution of the law and making sure that it continues to meet the needs of our country.

What this adds up to is a legal system that works. It is not just crucial to our success as a nation, it is one that is also recognised internationally, which is why the world looks to us to be its counsel and its courtroom.

In fact, in 2019 English law was trusted to govern some £250 billion of global mergers and acquisitions, and in 2021, over half of the cases heard in our Commercial Court were international in nature.

We lead Europe in legal services and globally we're second only to the United States. In terms of what this means for UK plc, the figures speak for themselves.

Our legal services sector contributes over £29 billion gross value added to our economy each year, employing some 350,000 people. I want to make sure that justice continues to drive our economic growth as we recover from the pandemic and rise to the cost-of-living challenges that we see ahead of us.

We've maintained our world-leading position because of the flexibility of our system and our willingness to embrace change. I'm clear that if we want to remain an attractive legal centre then we must continue finding those new and better ways to provide legal services.

As Lord Chancellor, I will do all I can to support legal innovation – so that our legal services can be transformed, not just for the benefit of businesses and the public, but for our legal profession too.

I want to see a modern justice system that is built around the people who use it. One where we do more online, with the right guidance and support.

Whether that's through making a claim or resolving a dispute. So that we can save time, cost, and stress to people seeking justice and reduce the burden on those who work in the system.

And we've got to be agile enough to ensure that English Law provides clarity for businesses through a period of constant change – in particular when it comes to digital and emerging technologies such as blockchain and smart contracts.

These technologies offer the opportunity for us to transform how our businesses operate, with more transparent and efficient ways of working.

I'm very much aware that we have already begun a process of modernising the courts to make sure that they are in good working order for the digital age.

As part of my duty for the efficient and effective running of the courts and tribunals, I intend to see through this ambitious and innovative programme.

I am also cognisant of the fact that COVID-19 was an extraordinarily difficult period and time for the justice system, the judiciary and our hardworking court staff who played a huge part in keeping things moving. I want to thank you for your hard work and determination to meet those challenges head on, including through innovation that was delivered at rapid pace.

While the knock-on effects of COVID-19 continue to be felt today, it is thanks to your dedication that we drove down the Crown Court backlog by around 2,000 cases from its peak in June 2021. This is a huge achievement – but there is still substantial work to be done. The family court sat to its highest ever level in 2021, and in the immigration and employment tribunals we have reduced the caseload from its peak during the pandemic.

As Lord Chancellor I am hopeful to see an end to the disruptive strike action that risks undoing the progress we have all worked so hard to achieve, and that is delaying justice for hundreds of victims – and causing the backlog to start to increase.

I'm pleased to have reached agreement with the leadership of the Criminal Bar Association today. They will be re-balloting their members quickly following new proposals for further reforms to criminal legal aid. These are generous and I would encourage CBA members to consider them carefully and positively.

I would like to say something about prisons and probation, for which I am also responsible as Secretary of State for Justice.

Prison and probation officers – some of whom were involved in the State Funeral procession – play a huge role in our justice system and are so often the hidden heroes of our society.

I want to also take the opportunity this morning to thank them for their immense efforts throughout the pandemic – and for their continuing hard work – to keep our prisons and the public safe.

I will continue to prioritise the creation of secure and modern prison places – ones that champion rehabilitation by equipping offenders to become active in the jobs market. This in itself will keep the public safe by preventing reoffending, but it will also help us play our part to drive the government's agenda for economic growth.

I also want to explore options for reforming the Probation Service, which is vital in steering prison leavers towards better futures.

And I am determined to make public protection the overriding factor in parole decisions – so that we can be assured of the confidence of both victims and the public.

Mr Attorney, I want to finish by thanking you all for your warm welcome and reiterating my dedication to the oath I have sworn today. As I step into this ancient role, I am very, very much aware of my constitutional responsibilities, as well as my duty to the judiciary, the courts, tribunals and to justice more broadly.

I look forward to working with all of you as we each play our part in the justice system – to cherish and protect the ideals on which it was built and to carry on building it around the people who are using it every day. Thank you.

[Media Advisory Notice – The fatal police shooting of Chris Kaba](#)

News story

HM Attorney General has issued a Media Advisory Notice in relation to the fatal shooting of Chris Kaba



The Attorney General confirms the requirement not to publish material which could prejudice ongoing criminal investigations and potential prosecutions.

Following the fatal police shooting of Chris Kaba on 05 September 2022 a homicide investigation has commenced in respect of the officer who fired the fatal shot.

HM Attorney General, the Rt Hon Michael Ellis KC MP, wishes to amplify the importance of not publishing any material where there is a risk that it could prejudice any ongoing criminal investigation or potential prosecution. Publishing this material could amount to contempt of court.

Editors, publishers and social media users should take legal advice to ensure they are in a position to fully comply with the obligations to which they are subject under both the common law and statutory regimes in relation to

publications

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[HM Law Officers sworn in](#)

News story

The Attorney General and Solicitor General were sworn in during a joint ceremony at the Royal Courts of Justice today.



The Rt Hon Michael Ellis KC MP was sworn in as His Majesty's Attorney General for England and Wales in a joint ceremony at the Royal Courts of Justice today.

His Majesty's Solicitor General Michael Tomlinson MP was also sworn in at the ceremony. Speaking after the ceremony, His Majesty's Attorney General, the Rt Hon Michael Ellis KC MP said:

I am honoured to be sworn in after returning as His Majesty's Attorney General for England and Wales. As the Government's chief legal adviser, my focus will be upholding the rule of law and strengthening our justice system.

I also warmly welcome Michael Tomlinson MP to his role as His Majesty's Solicitor General. Michael brings a wealth of experience and wisdom to the role.

Commenting on his new appointment, HM Solicitor General Michael Tomlinson MP said:

It is a privilege to be sworn in as His Majesty's Solicitor General for England and Wales.

There are important responsibilities that come with this unique role which has been part of our constitution for centuries, and I look forward to working with His Majesty's Attorney General to play my part in upholding the rule of law and carrying out the public interest functions of the Attorney General's Office.

HM Attorney General is the Government's chief legal advisor and also attends Cabinet. As well as providing advice to government, HM Law Officers (the Attorney General and Solicitor General) oversee the Law Officers' Departments which include the Crown Prosecution Service, Serious Fraud Office, Government Legal Department and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate.

HM Law Officers carry out a number of functions in the public interest, such as considering unduly lenient sentences and taking action when there has been a contempt of court. These functions are carried out independently of their role as government ministers.

The Rt Hon Michael Ellis KC MP was first appointed Attorney General on 2 March 2021 and held office until 10 September 2021. He was reappointed on 6 September 2022.

Michael Tomlinson MP was appointed as Solicitor General for England and Wales on 7 September 2022.

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[Up to £200,000 available to test security of smart devices used by nearly all UK businesses](#)



Enterprise 'Internet of Things' devices include printers, cameras, and room booking systems.

- Successful bidder will research potential vulnerabilities in popular devices to better protect against cyber risks
- Findings will help make sure current security measures and guidance are robust enough for evolving threats

Organisations can now apply for funding to support research into the cyber security of office devices which can connect to the internet, such as printers, cameras, and room booking systems, to ensure they are properly protected against hackers.

Thousands of UK businesses rely on these products, known as enterprise Internet of Things (IoT) devices, to increase productivity and enable hybrid working. The government is funding new research to uncover vulnerabilities in these commonly used enterprise IoT products and assess the cyber resilience of these devices.

Smart devices in the workplace can collect sensitive data which can be accessed by other users, making them an attractive target for cyber criminals to exploit. While devices may have some protections built-in, products with poor cyber security can leave companies using them at risk.

For example, in 2019 [Microsoft's researchers found Russian hackers](#) were compromising conference phones and office printers in organisations across many sectors, though Microsoft was able to successfully block the attacks before they could cause any damage.

The successful bidder will be awarded up to £200,000 to test popular devices and help identify if current security measures and guidance, such as international standards and [NCSC device security principles](#), are robust enough to protect businesses from evolving threats.

Cyber minister Julia Lopez said:

Technology played a pivotal role in keeping British businesses

going during the pandemic, helping the pivot to hybrid working and boosting productivity ever since.

This research will ensure we have the right measures in place to protect our economy and keep our offices and workers safe from cyber security threats.

The grant is part of the government's £2.6 billion [National Cyber Strategy](#) to protect the UK from cyber threats and grow the digital economy. It supports the UK's objective to take the lead in the technologies vital to cyber power and secure the Internet of Things and connected technologies used by consumers and enterprises.

This work complements the [Product Security and Telecommunications infrastructure bill](#) (PSTI) going through parliament which strengthens the cyber resilience of consumer IoT devices, such as smart speakers and smart TVs.

Notes to editors

Further details about this grant can be found [here](#).

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1. 5 October 2022

Added the news story to the cyber security section.

2. 29 September 2022

First published.

[UK Trade & Export Finance Forum 2022 – Thursday, 17th November](#)

News story

The UK Trade & Export Finance Forum brings together finance and business leaders for a day of presentations, case studies, panels, workshops and networking.



Whether you are a UK supplier looking to export overseas or an international corporate considering long-term financing, this forum will provide you with insight and business connections to support you in your export journey.

What to expect

Now in its fifth year, the event will return in hybrid format, bringing together over 600 attendees online and in central London.

The Forum will explore the importance of realising the export potential of emerging net zero technologies. You'll hear about the UK government's support for new sectors and recent product developments to help companies making the transition to clean energy, with case studies from SME's to large corporates. The popular International Workshops will also return, giving unique insights into the opportunities within key trading markets globally.

How to register

Attendance is free of charge. Please register your interest to attend before 17:00 GMT Friday, 10th November 2022.

Registrations are subject to approval by UK Export Finance.

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