

[Robin Simcox appointed as Commissioner for Countering Extremism](#)

News story

Robin Simcox confirmed in substantive role.



The Home Office today confirmed the appointment of Robin Simcox as the substantive [Commissioner for Countering Extremism \(CCE\)](#). His tenure will last for a three-year period.

Robin was first appointed to the role of Interim Commissioner in March 2021. Following a robust open competition for the substantive role, Robin's appointment has been agreed by the Home Secretary.

Home Secretary, Priti Patel, said:

Robin Simcox is extremely distinguished in the field of countering-extremism and brings considerable experience and expertise to the substantive Commissioner role he is taking up at the CCE.

His wealth of knowledge will help to improve our understanding across a range of ideologies and behaviours, tackling extremism which has no place in our society.

Robin Simcox, Commissioner for Countering Extremism, said:

It is a privilege to be appointed the substantive Commissioner for Countering Extremism. Our core values must be robustly defended in the face of extremist ideologies.

The CCE will help increase the sophistication of our response to extremism by scrutinising the approach taken not only by government but also wider society.

The CCE is a non-statutory expert committee of the Home Office which operates independently that supports society to fight all forms of extremism and advises the government and external partners on new policies to deal with these threats.

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[Final grant offer provided to Britishvolt](#)

News story

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The government has provided Britishvolt with a final grant offer through the Automotive Transformation Fund for its planned gigafactory in Northumberland.

The factory will produce enough batteries for over 300,000 electric vehicles each year, significantly supporting the UK automotive industry's transition to a zero emissions future and increased production of electric vehicles. The project is set to create 3,000 direct highly-skilled jobs and another 5,000 indirect jobs in the wider supply chain.

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

I'm delighted to confirm we have now provided Britishvolt with a final grant offer through the Automotive Transformation Fund. The Blyth gigafactory will turbocharge our plans to embed a globally competitive electric vehicle supply chain in the UK and it is fantastic to see how the project is progressing.

The vast site will ensure Britain can fully capture the benefits of

the booming global electric vehicle market. The well-paid jobs and growth it will generate for the North East of England will be transformational and are exactly the reason we are investing to make the UK the best place in the world for automotive manufacturing.

The government originally [announced backing for the project](#) in January 2022.

The Automotive Transformation Fund is an £850 million programme to electrify Britain's automotive supply chain and protect our nation's competitiveness in the global market.

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[Civil news: opportunities for housing and debt and HPCDS work](#)

Housing and debt tender

We are inviting tenders to deliver housing and debt contract work from 12 September 2022 until 31 August 2023 in the following procurement areas:

1. City of Kingston upon Hull
2. Cheshire
3. Shropshire
4. Staffordshire
5. South east Wales
6. South Tyneside
7. Wigan

The opportunity to deliver housing and debt services is open to any organisation that can meet the minimum tender requirements. An organisation does not need to be a current legal aid provider to tender for this opportunity.

Whilst we would like organisations to deliver work from 12 September 2022 where possible, organisations who are not able to can tender to start delivering work from a later date.

There is no limit to the number of contracts that can be awarded to deliver housing and debt services in a procurement area.

Applicants can bid to deliver housing and debt services in a procurement area through an office that is either a:

*permanent presence in the procurement area, or a *part-time presence in the procurement area

HPCDS tender

We are also inviting tenders to deliver services in the following Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme (HPCDS) areas:

1. Crewe
2. Hull
3. Stafford
4. Walsall
5. Wigan

Services will start on 12 September until 30 September 2023, except for Wigan HPCDS which will start on 1 October 2022. Organisations who are not able to deliver work from that date can tender to start delivering work from a later date.

Organisations may bid for housing and debt contract work and/or HPCDS contract work through this procurement process. They are not required to bid for both housing and debt and HPCDS.

However, organisations bidding for an HPCDS contract must hold, or successfully bid for as part of this procurement process, a 2018 Standard Civil Contract. This needs to include authorisation in the housing and debt categories of law.

When awarding HPCDS contracts preference will be given to organisations:

*with recent and relevant experience of delivering HPCDS services *with an office in the corresponding housing and debt procurement area *able to start delivering work on the contract start date

The Legal Aid Agency (LAA) is seeking to award one contract for each of the HPCDS areas listed above.

How to apply

Tenders must be submitted using the LAA's e-Tendering system.

Tender deadline

The tender opens on 27 July 2022 and closes at 5pm on 17 August 2022.

Further information

[Civil tender activity 2021](#) – to find out more and download documents

[e-Tendering system](#) – to submit your tender

Cyber Co-operation with Germany Strengthens

News story

Lieutenant General Tom Copinger-Symes, Deputy Commander Strategic Command, has visited the German Cyber and Information Domain Service (CIDS) as part of a co-operation programme between the two organisations.



Lieutenant General Copinger-Symes with Vice Admiral Dr Thomas Daum

An updated bilateral arrangement, signed in an official ceremony during the visit, brings benefits to both countries. These are implemented through work strands set up to further hone cyber skills and capabilities, share information and experience, and draw on the relative strengths within each organisation.

As part of the visit, discussions were held on the CIDS approach to Cyber Operations and Cyber Career Management, and the establishment of an eighth 'Cyber Competency' work strand.

This new strand focuses on pooling cyber lessons from exercises and operational activity to improve how the UK and Germany operate in the Cyber Domain.

Speaking on the partnership, Lt Gen Copinger-Symes said;

With conflict on our doorstep, close cooperation with like-minded partners has never been more important. That's why our partnership with CIDS is so exciting.

It brings significant opportunities to learn from each other, pool resources and work together to strengthen the whole of NATO in this developing area of business.

This sentiment was echoed by Vice Admiral Dr Thomas Daum, Commander and Chief of CIDS, who said;

Our bilateral work in the cyber domain will help to ensure the safety of both countries, and our allies, in cyberspace.

By sharing our skills and experience we can develop a greater understanding of how we can best integrate cyber into our defence operations to offer the competitive edge required.

The visit follows on from a productive workshop hosted in Northwood earlier this year led by Major General James Roddis, Director Strategy Strategic Command, and Brigadier General Peter Richert, Head CIDS Operations.

Plans are in place to hold a second workshop later in the year, to complement the regular meetings at work strand level to ensure progress continues.

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[Would-be gun importer receives increased sentence after referral to the Court of Appeal](#)

News story

Haroon Iqbal will spend longer in prison for attempting to import a prohibited weapon.



A man who attempted to import a gun into the UK has received an increased

prison sentence after his case was referred to the Court of Appeal by the then Solicitor General, Alex Chalk QC MP.

From November 2021-February 2022, Haroon Iqbal, now 32, ordered various gun parts from the dark web and gave the seller detailed instructions on how to hide them in packages to avoid detection.

He was caught after unknowingly communicating with an undercover US Law Enforcement officer while carrying out his plan.

On 26 May 2022, Iqbal was sentenced at Birmingham Crown Court to 2 years 3 months' imprisonment for attempting to possess a prohibited weapon.

Following the sentencing, the then Solicitor General, Alex Chalk QC MP, referred Iqbal's sentence to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme as he felt that the original sentence was too low.

On 27 July 2022 the Court found his original sentence to be unduly lenient and increased it to 3 years and 9 months' imprisonment.

Speaking after the hearing, the now Solicitor General Edward Timpson CBE QC MP said:

Iqbal devised a sophisticated plan to bring a prohibited weapon into the UK, and knowingly tried to evade law enforcement to achieve this.

I welcome the decision to increase his sentence, which better reflects the serious nature of this offence and its potential consequences had Iqbal been successful.

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