

New Solicitor General appointed

The Prime Minister has appointed Michael Ellis MP as Solicitor General.

The Solicitor General will oversee the work of the Law Officers Departments which include the Crown Prosecution Service and Serious Fraud Office, and the Government Legal Department and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate.

The Solicitor General also carries 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 a Government minister.

Commenting on his appointment, Solicitor General Michael Ellis said:

I am delighted to be appointed as Solicitor General for England and Wales. I look forward to working with the Attorney General to play my part in making law and politics work together at the heart of the UK constitution.

I want to thank my predecessor, Lucy Frazer, and I look forward to working with her on cross-government criminal justice issues in her new role at the Ministry of Justice.

I am proud to be joining the Attorney General's Office (AGO), a unique and historic government department which has the highest staff engagement score in central Government.

Nottingham teen has sentence increased for knife attack

A youth who carried out a stabbing in Nottingham city centre has had his unduly lenient sentence increased after referral by the Attorney General, Geoffrey Cox QC MP.

On 8 March the offender, now 18, approached the victim in the Trinity Square area of Nottingham and asked "what are you looking at?" When the victim went to walk away the offender pulled out a large knife.

The victim tried to escape but the offender lunged at him with the knife on at least 4 occasions. One blow made contact with the victim's shoulder, causing a deep wound that required 4 stitches.

On 16 May the offender was sentenced to an 18 month rehabilitation order at Nottingham Crown Court. This included 240 hours of unpaid work, a supervision requirement for 18 months and regular contact with a police officer assigned to his case.

The Court of Appeal increased this to 18 months detention and training order, after the sentence was referred as being unduly lenient.

After the hearing the Attorney General said:

“This was a serious offence, for which a rehabilitation order was not appropriate. A custodial sentence was important for both the protection of the public and upholding confidence in the justice process.”

Be aware of safety warning signs when swimming near water structures this summer

People looking to cool off this summer by taking a dip in the region's rivers have been advised to pay close attention to warning signs when swimming close to Environment Agency structures.

The Environment Agency owns and maintains assets in many locations across the East Anglian river network and on the coast, and swimming too close to them could lead to serious injury or even death.

Our structures carry warning signs outlining that strong currents, underwater structures and sudden changes in depths can all pose a serious risk to even the most experienced of swimmers.

Those who ignore the warnings are not only potentially putting their lives at risk, but could be committing an offence leading to a day in court and a £1,000 fine.

Jumping or diving off our assets – which includes weirs, sluices, locks and pumping stations – is strictly prohibited.

Paul Separovic, Waterways team leader at the Environment Agency, said:

In partnership with local councils and landowners, we work to advise on the safety risks connected with our river structures.

The Environment Agency looks after many structures that keep our waterways safe, our navigation channels clear and our properties protected from flooding.

It is important that people know how to stay safe around these structures while enjoying being around water this summer.

- Don't be tempted to jump from structures – dangerous objects could be hidden beneath the surface and cause injury or even death
- Use designated crossings only – don't be tempted to walk across weirs. Fast-flowing water will knock you over.
- Keep safe by reading information boards around navigational locks, and always pay attention to warning signs.

For further details about the dangers of wild swimming, follow guidance from [Public Health England](#), the [Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents](#) and the [Royal National Lifeboats Institute](#).

If you spot someone jumping off of, swimming close to or damaging Environment Agency structures, report it – call 0800 80 70 60.

[Birmingham city council: response to the Improvement Panel's report](#)

In his response the Secretary of State endorses Birmingham city council's new model of progressive assurance.

Published 26 July 2019 From: [Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government](#) and [The Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP](#) PDF, 168KB, 2 pages

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Documents



[Secretary of State's response to the Birmingham Independent Improvement Panel's final report](#)

PDF, 168KB, 2 pages

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Details

The Birmingham Independent Improvement Panel stepped down on 31 March 2019 after over 4 years working with Birmingham city council in response to the [Kerslake report on governance at the council](#).

This letter from the Secretary of State responds to the Panel's report issued when they stepped down. As part of it the Secretary of State endorses the council's proposals for a new model of progressive assurance as a mechanism for putting in place the external challenge to the council recommended by the Panel in their report.

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["HS2 saved our wedding!"](#)

A bride and groom in Cheshire have thanked contractors working on Britain's new high speed railway, after coming to the rescue on the eve of their wedding.

Published 26 July 2019 From: [High Speed Two \(HS2\) Limited](#)



Newlyweds Oliver Daniels and Holly Johnson

Days of heavy rain had flooded Oliver Daniels and Holly Johnson's garden wedding venue in Blakenhall, making access to their marquee virtually impossible.

The couple quickly made arrangements for the wedding party to use the car park at nearby Betley Village Hall and then transport them to the venue by bus. However, they still had to find a way of getting 130 wedding guests – as well as catering staff, equipment and supplies – from the venue's gravelled yard across the sodden, muddy field in to the marquee.

3 days to go

With 3 days to go until the big day, the mother of the groom approached a High Speed 2 (HS2) Limited contractor for help. Fortunately, [Balfour Beatty](#) are currently working at a HS2 compound in the Cheshire village, close to the home of Oliver's parents, Jonathan and Katie, and where the reception was due to take place.

The Balfour Beatty team were expecting a delivery of 50 new MaxiTrack panels the next day and were happy to loan their track matting to ensure the bridal party could get to the venue dry and mud-free. Foreman Ian Matthews and 2 site workers hand-laid the temporary walkway just hours before the wedding took place.



Wedding marquee with MaxiTrack walkway

Iain Andrews, Head of Community Engagement at HS2 Ltd, said:

The quick thinking of the Balfour Beatty team in assisting with the Daniels' wedding is a great example of how HS2 and its supply chain is working with communities along the route to build respectful and long-term relationships, while taking opportunities to have a positive impact.

How we and our suppliers behave as we build Britain's new high speed railway is just as important as what we're creating, and that's why we aim to be a good neighbour every day in all the communities in which we're operating in.

Ground investigation works

International infrastructure group Balfour Beatty are currently providing ground investigation works in preparation for the Phase 2a section of HS2's route that will link Birmingham and Crewe in 2027 as part of Europe's largest infrastructure project.

Meanwhile, work on the section between Birmingham and London is well underway ahead of a 2026 opening. The project already supports 9,000 jobs, with this figure expected to surpass 30,000 at peak construction. The rest of Phase Two

(Phase 2b) will create a Y-shaped network, going to Manchester in the West and Leeds in the East, and is planned to be completed by 2033.

Andy Maddock, Site Agent, Balfour Beatty, said:

Wedding planning is certainly different to the boreholes and trial pits we are used to dealing with, but we had the materials and labour available, and we were glad to help.

Oliver Daniels and Holly Johnson (both aged 28) met while studying engineering in France, where they were introduced by mutual friends.

Expressing gratitude for Balfour Beatty's assistance in their hour of need, the newlyweds said:

HS2 saved our wedding! We had organised the entire day ourselves and thought we had everything covered, but unfortunately you can never rely on the Great British weather. Without the help of Balfour Beatty we would have been quite literally stuck!

We have been so overwhelmed by the kindness, efficiency and generosity of the team based in Blakenhall. Thank you from the bride and groom, and the whole wedding party!



Newlyweds Oliver Daniels and Holly Johnson arriving at their wedding reception

The wedding service was held on Saturday 15 June at Reaseheath Hall, an 18th century country house in Nantwich, and, following the garden reception, the couple jetted off on honeymoon to Iceland's capital, Reykjavík.

Press and media enquiries

For enquiries during office working hours, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm: 020 7944 6149

For enquiries outside of these hours and at the weekend: 020 7944 0550

The press and media enquiries line is for accredited journalists only