

[News story: Ministerial appointments: January 2018](#)

This government is about building a country fit for the future – one that truly works for everyone with a stronger economy and a fairer society.

This reshuffle helps us do just that by bringing fresh talent into government, boosting delivery in key policy areas like housing, health and social care, and ensuring the government looks more like the country it serves.

It also allows a new generation of gifted ministers to step up and make life better for people across the whole UK.

[Press release: Inspector appointed to investigate Northamptonshire County Council](#)

The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Sajid Javid, has today (9 January 2017) appointed an inspector to look into concerns around financial management and governance at Northamptonshire County Council.

Under powers granted to him under the Local Government Act 1999, the Secretary of State can commission an independent inspection to better understand whether a council is complying with its 'best value' duty – a legal requirement to ensure good governance and effective management of resources.

The Secretary of State has now has appointed Max Caller CBE to complete a report He will have a legal right to inspect and take away documents, and to access any council properties.

Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government, Sajid Javid, said:

My decision to appoint an inspector is not taken lightly. I hope it sends a strong signal that robust processes are in place to investigate allegations of failures in financial management and governance in local government.

Read the [written ministerial statement](#).

The best value duty was introduced in England and Wales by the [Local Government Act 1999](#). Its provisions came into force in April 2000. The aim was to improve local services in terms of both cost and quality.

A best value authority must make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness ([section 3\(1\) of the Local Government Act 1999](#)).

Under [section 10 of the Local Government Act 1999](#), the Secretary of State may appoint a person to carry out an inspection of a specified best value authority's compliance with the best value requirements in relation to specified functions.

News story: Charles Forte appointed new MOD Chief Information Officer

Following an open competition to both internal military and civilian candidates and to candidates from outside the MOD, the Permanent Secretary Stephen Lovegrove and General Sir Chris Deverell, Commander Joint Forces Command have today announced the appointment of Charles Forte as the new Defence CIO.

Charles has 36 years industry experience gained from leading Information Technology companies globally. He has previously had the role of CIO at British Petroleum and in an interim position at Thameswater. He was also the Chief Executive Officer of Global IT Service at Prudential.

Lieutenant General Ivan Hooper, who has been acting both as the Chief Executive Officer of Information Systems & Services (ISS) and the Defence CIO will hand over the latter role to Charles when he joins the Department. Charles is expected to start in post towards the end of January 2018.

As part of his new role, Charles will be responsible for the development of MOD strategy and policy on the operation and protection of all MOD Information and Communications Technology, including cybersecurity.

[News story: Resources to raise awareness of IP in universities and colleges](#)

Since September 2017, the IPO has published a suite of new tools for students and lecturers in further and higher education. The new resources aim to develop a greater understanding on IP with students and how IP impacts on their future careers.

The IP Tutor tools, developed by the IPO, CIPA, CiTMA, lecturers and industry professionals, provides information on IP.

[IP Tutor Plus](#) is a resource for university lecturers to deliver IP lectures. There are four modules; creative, humanities, STEM and law, business and accounting subject areas.

These free resources include:

- PowerPoint slides
- lecture notes
- case studies
- wider discussion points

IP Tutor Plus compliments the existing [IP Tutor](#) resource. IP Tutor introduces and develops a student's understanding of what IP is and how it works.

IP Tutor Plus helps lecturers engage their students to develop their understanding of managing and exploiting IP, and the relevance for their future academic studies or careers.

IP for Research

Created for PhD students and researchers to develop a greater understanding of how IP can maximise the impact of their research. The [IP for Research](#) resource includes:

- 6 quick guides on commercialising IP
- an IP workshop
- an IP skills lens

IP management tools

The [Intellectual Asset Management Guide for Universities](#) and [Lambert Toolkit](#) support the setting of IP strategies within universities, and the management of effective collaborations between universities and businesses.

Resources for further education

Before students reach university, the [Future Innovators Toolkit](#) provides

level 3 Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) teachers with the resources they need to introduce IP at any point in the curriculum.

For further information on the suite of [IP for Education tools](#), please contact the [Innovation Policy Team](#).

[Speech: Dormitories of hope](#)

It was raining by the time we got to Marrakesh. The long-threatened storm had held off as we had forged our way across the flat desert that forms the northern hinterland boundary to the magical city. But the rain teemed down as we wound our way slowly through the traffic and out beyond the city towards the dimly-seen Atlas Mountains beyond.

As the rain fell, so did the temperature. In Rabat that morning, it had been a balmy 21 degrees. Now, in the shadow of the Mountains, the temperature was a chilly 8 degrees and the stiff breeze that accompanied the rain made it feel a lot colder.

Fouad parked the car outside the first dormitory. The rain fell in solid slats across the car's windscreen. Pulling my jacket on, I walked down the mud bank towards the door of the dormitory, my feet splashing in the puddles as I slid towards the door.

Inside, a large fire gave a semblance of warmth, but the fact that no one removed their jackets even inside told the real story. The girls were doing their homework, quietly, conscientiously. They looked up and greeted me "Ahlan wa Sahlan".

But I have got ahead of myself...

Ten years ago, a British man set up Education for All in Imlil. A charity whose sole purpose is to try and help girls from poor and isolated rural communities have the opportunity to continue their education beyond 12. Many secondary schools in rural communities are heavily over-subscribed, so the timetable is run on a 'shift' system. Although classes start at 0830, pupils often have periods during the day without classes. Parents, worried about what their daughters would do during those 'down' periods, would frequently prevent their daughters from attending secondary school as a result. EFA builds dormitories near to rural secondary schools, giving the girls a secure, safe environment in which they can live, work and study and to which they can 'retire' during the periods of the day when they do not have lessons at the schools. The girls arrive on a Monday morning and go home on a Friday afternoon. The success rate is phenomenal: 83% of girls who go through the EFA dormitories go on to university. The first year of the dormitories, EFA practically had to beg parents to let their daughters stay in the dormitories. Now demand significantly outstrips supply.

And it was to those dormitories that I had come on that cold, wet December afternoon. The dormitories are well-built and solid, with good kitchens and places for the girls to study, eat, sleep and chat. But they are not luxurious. As I was shown round the buildings, it dawned on me why the success rate is so high. The girls in the dormitories came from the poorest families in the poorest villages. I saw pictures of some of their houses – whole families living, eating, cooking and sleeping in one room. No one in their families had had an education. These girls were being offered a huge chance and they were seizing it firmly with both hands – it made me embarrassed to think how easily we take a formal education for granted in the UK and how often we waste that opportunity.

And I realised again how vitally important education is. Without it the odds are stacked against you – it is harder for a person to reach their potential; harder to develop as an individual; harder to imagine that they will grow up to make a useful contribution to society. And if girls and women do not receive a full education, then a country immediately loses at least 50% of its potential, with a consequent economic and political loss.

The rain stopped half way through my tour of the dormitories and we went up onto the roof – a roof which was flooded by the downpour. The clouds had lifted and a glorious evening was in prospect. The view was spectacular: freshly-fallen snow was visible on the shoulders of Mount Toubkal who stood like a giant at the end of the valley. The wind was biting.

Back inside, we had a look at the bedrooms. The bunk-beds, originally built for four girls to sleep in each room, had been adapted in response to demand for places and now stood three high – each room sleeping six girls. I could see my breath as we talked. There is no heating in the rooms – and again I thought of shame at the electric heaters at home and how we take such luxuries for granted – so the girls huddle down under blankets every night.

As I walked along the bitterly cold road to visit one of the other dormitories, hugging my down jacket closer around my ears, I thought how truly inspirational those girls are – so grateful for what EFA has offered them; so aware of the chance that they have been given; so determined to make the most of the opportunity they have been offered; so diligent, polite and hard-working. At once an example to us all and a pointed reminder to take nothing in life for granted.

And I reflected how only sustained access to education will enable these girls (and thousands of others like them across the country) to realise their dreams to be the Doctors, Teachers, Lawyers and Leaders of tomorrow: such a future would indeed be a bright one for Morocco.