

Violent robbers have sentences increased under the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme

News story

Two violent robbers have each received an increased sentence after their cases were referred to the Court of Appeal.



Two violent robbers have each received an increased jail sentence after the Solicitor General Alex Chalk QC MP referred their cases to the Court of Appeal.

In 2018, Royston Thomas, then-37 and Aaron Bonner, then-43, both entered a local hair salon and demanded money. They assaulted the owner and stole approximately £100. When one of the customers, who was 87, attempted to leave the salon to find help, she was shoved to the floor by one of the offenders and suffered a fractured hip and bruising. The other offender stole her handbag.

On 3 February 2022, at Bradford Crown Court both offenders were convicted of robbery. Bonner was also convicted of possession of a bladed article, while Thomas was convicted of possession of a Class A drug. Bonner was sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment, while Thomas was sentenced to 6 years' imprisonment.

Following the sentencing, the Solicitor General referred the sentences of both Thomas and Bonner to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme.

On 4 May the Court found the original sentences to be unduly lenient. Bonner's sentence was increased to 6 years' imprisonment, while Thomas saw his sentence increased to 8 years' imprisonment with a 3-year extended licence.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General Alex Chalk QC MP said:

This particularly violent robbery was a terrifying incident for the hair salon owner and customers.

I believed that the behaviour of Royston Thomas and Aaron Bonner warranted a stronger sentence, and I am glad that the Court agreed.

Published 4 May 2022

Last updated 4 May 2022 + [show all updates](#)

1. 4 May 2022

Small punctuation amendment

2. 4 May 2022

First published.

[NSTiX OpTech Co-Creation Centre seeks innovations for audio and visual capture and analysis](#)

- DASA has launched a new Innovation Focus Area (IFA) called “Double Act: National Security Technologies”
- The first challenge area of this IFA focuses on state of the art audio and visual capture hardware and software
- £75,000-£100,000 available for innovative audio and visual capture and analysis technologies

The [Defence and Security Accelerator](#) (DASA) is pleased to launch a new Innovation Focus Area (IFA) called “[Double Act: National Security Technologies](#)”. This IFA is run on behalf of the NSTiX Operational Tech Co-Creation Centre (CCC).

[Double Act: National Security Technologies](#) comprises of different National security technology challenge areas, which will be introduced over time, all of which seek evolving state-of-the-art technologies that have the potential for integration into the NSTiX Operational Tech CCC research programme.

The first challenge area of this IFA focuses on state of the art audio and visual capture hardware and software.

Key dates and funding

Challenge area 1: Audio and visual capture is open for proposals from the 4th May 2022 to at least 14 September 2022, before closing and moving on to another challenge area when suitable.

DASA expects to award between £75,000 and £100,000 per proposal.

Challenge area 1: Audio and visual capture

In a tech-driven world, it is vital the UK possesses state-of-the-art technologies to address frontline technology challenges, to protect our way of life and promote prosperity.

Challenge area 1 focuses on addressing audio and visual capture hardware and software innovations to capture, store, transfer and tag audio, visual and audio/visual evidence. This is vital to ensure that visual data can be captured and analysed efficiently.

DASA and NSTiX Operational Tech CCC seek proposals that further mature existing developments, beginning at [Technology Readiness Level](#) (TRL) 4/5 and completing at TRL 6/7.

[Do you have a solution? Read the full competition document and submit a proposal](#)

Any solutions proposed need to produce high-quality data and need to process and analyse the natural language of the data.

Examples of solutions include:

- new durable storage methods utilising ultra-low power with a low bit error
- ultra low power-edge analytics for both audio and visual
- data analytics on often low resolution images, at volume, on a low-bandwidth
- sensor technologies for imagery, i.e. sensors that can operate in low or very low light environment but still generate high-resolution images

There is potential for successful proposals to work within the NSTiX Operational Tech CCC research programme, which offers an opportunity for successful innovators to engage with the end users and there is potential for further progression and integration into the end user's overall research programme.

Future challenge areas this IFA will address themes identified under the National Security Strategic Investment Fund (NSSIF) areas of interest which can be found [here](#). Please keep an eye on the IFA page for updates on which challenge area will be the next focus.

Submit a proposal

Do you have a solution or novel approach that may help enhance our audio and visual capturing capabilities? Submit an idea and help DASA and NSTiX Operational Tech CCC accelerate the development of technologies for national security.

[Read the full competition document to learn more and submit a proposal.](#)

Manor of Northstead

News story

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has this day appointed Neil Quentin Gordon Parish to be Steward and Bailiff of the Manor of Northstead.



The Chancellor of the Exchequer has this day appointed Neil Quentin Gordon Parish to be Steward and Bailiff of the Manor of Northstead.

Published 4 May 2022

Russia cut off from UK services

- Foreign Secretary to cut off Russia's access to the UK's management consulting, accounting and PR services
- further sanctions will also hit those behind Putin's vicious disinformation campaign, including RT and Sputnik online
- the UK has now sanctioned over 1600 individuals and entities

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss is today (Wednesday 4 May) announcing a ban on services exports to Russia, cutting them off from doing business with UK sectors that are critical to the Russian economy.

The new measures will mean Russia's businesses can no longer benefit from the UK's world class accountancy, management consultancy, and PR services, which account for 10% of Russian imports in these sectors.

Russia is heavily reliant on Western services companies for the production and export of manufactured goods, and today's measures will further ratchet up economic pressure on Putin's siege economy.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

Doing business with Putin's regime is morally bankrupt and helps fund a war machine that is causing untold suffering across Ukraine. Cutting Russia's access to British services will put more pressure on the Kremlin and ultimately help ensure Putin fails in Ukraine.

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

Our professional services exports are extraordinarily valuable to many countries, which is exactly why we're locking Russia out. By restricting Russia's access to our world-class management consultants, accountants and PR firms, we're ratcheting up economic pressure on the Kremlin to change course.

Following the publication this week of UK-funded research exposing the Kremlin's shadowy troll factory tactics, the Foreign Secretary has also announced 63 new sanctions, many of which hit actors and organisations from mainstream media organisations with asset freezes and travel bans.

This is bolstered by new legislation now in force which means social media, internet services and app store companies must take action to block content from 2 of Russia's major sources of disinformation, RT and Sputnik.

Tech and Digital Economy Minister Chris Philp said:

For too long RT and Sputnik have churned out dangerous nonsense dressed up as serious news to justify Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

These outlets have already been booted off the airwaves in Britain and we've barred anyone from doing business with them. Now we've moved to pull the plug on their websites, social media accounts and apps to further stop the spread of their lies.

Those sanctioned today includes significant individuals at Channel One, a major state-owned outlet in Russia. Channel One is known for spreading

disinformation in Russia, justifying Putin's illegal invasion as a 'Special Military Operation'. Those sanctioned include war correspondents who are embedded with Russian forces in Ukraine:

- Evgeny Poddubny, a war correspondent for the All-Russia State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company
- Alexander Kots, a war correspondent for Russian newspaper Komsomolskaya Pravda
- Dmitry Steshin, a Russian journalist and special correspondent for Komsomolskaya Pravda

Other strategic propaganda organisations sanctioned include:

- all Russia State Television and Radio Broadcasting, a major state-owned broadcaster that has played a key role in justifying Putin's aggression against Ukraine
- InfoRos, a news agency spreading destabilising disinformation about Ukraine and is alleged to have links to Russian intelligence agencies
- SouthFront, a disinformation site that has spread false information that seeks to justify Russia's invasion of Ukraine
- the Strategic Culture Foundation, an online journal spreading disinformation about Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including the role of Russian forces in the killing of civilians in Bucha

The UK will continue to work closely with social media platforms and allies to uncover, expose, and counter the Kremlin's disinformation operation.

Alongside previous asset freezes against media outlets already in place the UK is systematically shutting out Putin's propaganda machine.

[Dame Sue Owen appointed as Non-Executive Chair of the United Kingdom Debt Management Office's Advisory Board](#)

News story

HM Treasury has announced today that Dame Sue Owen has been appointed as the first Non-Executive Chair of the United Kingdom Debt Management Office's (DMO) Advisory Board.



Dame Sue brings a wealth of experience to the role, having previously been a civil servant for 30 years, including 14 at HM Treasury. Amongst other things, she worked on fiscal policy and debt management policy at HM Treasury, including with the DMO between 2002 and 2006.

Most recently she served as the Permanent Secretary at the Department for Culture Media and Sport, from 2013 to 2019.

The appointment of Dame Sue as Non-Executive Chair of the DMO's Advisory Board is for a period of three years.

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury, John Glen said:

I am delighted to welcome Dame Sue Owen as the first Non-Executive Chair of the DMO's Advisory Board. Her extensive leadership and governance experience will be a great asset for guiding the DMO's Board in the coming years.

Dame Sue's appointment will help support the DMO to continue delivering its critical objectives, including meeting the government's financing requirements, to the highest standards.

DMO Chief Executive, Sir Robert Stheeman said:

I am extremely pleased that Dame Sue Owen has been appointed as the first Non-Executive Chair of the DMO's new Advisory Board. Dame Sue's extensive experience at a senior level in both the public and private sectors will be a huge asset to us. Her previous experience, in particular at HM Treasury, in UK fiscal and debt management policy, means that she will be exceptionally well-placed to make a valuable contribution to the role of the Advisory Board, as a key component of the DMO's governance arrangements.

Dame Sue Owen said:

I am delighted to be appointed to Chair the DMO's Advisory Board. The DMO underpins the smooth operation of the public finances.

Their work tends to go unrecognised as they are so good at the job; 2020-21 was an astonishing year with gilt sales at a record £485.8 billion and cash management turnover totalling £7.1 trillion, 45% up on the year before.

Further information

- The DMO is an Executive Agency of HM Treasury and is responsible for delivering HM Government's debt management and cash management requirements, lending to local authorities, and managing certain public sector funds
- The appointment of a Non-Executive Chair of the Advisory Board was a recommendation included in the Tailored Review of the DMO, published in June 2021
- The appointment of Dame Sue followed a fair and open recruitment campaign, led by HM Treasury, in accordance with the requirements of the Governance Code for Public Appointments
- Dame Sue Owen DCB is an experienced and respected economist. She spent 10 years as an academic and 30 in the civil service, including 14 at HM Treasury, where she worked with the DMO between 2002-06. She also held senior roles at the FC0, DfID, and DWP, before retiring as Permanent Secretary of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport in April 2019. Dame Sue is now a specialist partner at Flint-Global, a non-executive Director at Pool Re, Pantheon International plc, and Serco plc, and she chairs the Royal Ballet Governors.

Published 4 May 2022